

PATTERNS

for College Writing

TWELFTH EDITION

A Rhetorical Reader
and Guide



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Laurie G. Kirsner
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Patterns for College Writing

A RHETORICAL READER AND GUIDE

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For Peter Phelps (1936–1990), with thanks

PREFACE

Since it was first published, *Patterns for College Writing* has been used by millions of students at colleges and universities across the United States. We have been delighted by the overwhelmingly positive response to the first eleven editions of *Patterns*, and we continue to be gratified by positive feedback from the many instructors who find *Patterns* to be the most accessible and the most pedagogically sound rhetoric-reader they have ever used. In preparing this twelfth edition, we have worked hard to fine-tune the features that have made *Patterns* the most popular composition reader available today and to develop new features to enhance the book's usefulness for both instructors and students.

What Instructors and Students Like about *Patterns for College Writing*

An Emphasis on Critical Reading

The Introduction, “How to Use This Book,” and Chapter 1, “Reading to Write: Becoming a Critical Reader,” prepare students to become analytical readers and writers by showing them how to apply critical reading strategies to a typical selection and by providing sample responses to the various kinds of writing prompts in the book. Not only does this material introduce students to the book's features, but it also prepares them to tackle reading and writing assignments in their other courses.

Extensive Coverage of the Writing Process

The remaining chapters in Part One, “The Writing Process” (Chapters 2 through 5), comprise a “mini-rhetoric,” offering advice on drafting, writing, revising, and editing as they introduce students to activities such as freewriting, brainstorming, clustering, and journal writing. These chapters also include numerous writing exercises to give students opportunities for immediate practice.

Detailed Coverage of the Patterns of Development

In Part Two, “Readings for Writers,” Chapters 6 through 14 explain and illustrate the patterns of development that students typically use in their college writing assignments: narration, description, exemplification,

process, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification and division, definition, and argumentation. Each chapter begins with a comprehensive introduction that presents a definition and a paragraph-length example of the pattern to be discussed and then explains the particular writing strategies and applications associated with it. Next, each chapter analyzes one or two annotated student essays to show how the pattern can be used in particular college writing situations. Chapter 15, “Combining the Patterns,” illustrates how the various patterns of development discussed in Chapters 6 through 14 can work together in an essay.

A Diverse and Popular Selection of Readings

Varied in subject, style, and cultural perspective, the sixty-nine professional selections engage students while providing them with outstanding models for writing. We have tried to achieve a balance between classic authors (George Orwell, Jessica Mitford, E. B. White, Martin Luther King Jr.) and newer voices (Sherman Alexie, Amy Chua, Amanda Brown) so that instructors have a broad range of readings to choose from.

More Student Essays Than Any Comparable Text

To provide students with realistic models for improving their own writing, we include sixteen sample student essays (one new to this edition). These essays are available as transparency masters so that instructors can use them more effectively in the classroom. They can also be downloaded from the *Patterns for College Writing* companion Web site, **bedfordstmartins.com/patterns**.

Helpful Coverage of Grammar Issues

Grammar in Context boxes in chapter introductions offer specific advice on how to identify and correct the grammar, mechanics, and punctuation problems that students are likely to encounter when they work with particular patterns of development. Practice exercises for mastering these grammar skills are available on *Re:Writing*, a comprehensive online exercise collection accessible at the *Patterns* companion Web site.

Apparatus Designed to Help Students Learn

Each professional essay in the text is followed by four types of questions. These questions are designed to help students assess their understanding of the essay’s content and of the writer’s purpose and audience; to recognize the stylistic and structural techniques used to shape the essay; and to become sensitive to the nuances of language. Each essay is also accompanied by a Journal Entry prompt, Writing Workshop topics (suggestions for full-length writing assignments), and Thematic Connections that identify

related readings in the text. Also following each essay is a Combining the Patterns feature that focuses on different patterns of development used in the essay and possible alternatives to these patterns. Each chapter ends with a list of Writing Assignments and a Collaborative Activity. Many of these assignments and activities have been updated to reflect the most current topics as well as the most up-to-date trends and sites available on the Web.

Extensive Cultural and Historical Background for All Readings

In addition to a biographical headnote, each reading is preceded by a headnote containing essential background information to help students make connections between the reading and the historical, social, and economic forces that shaped it.

An Introduction to Visual Texts

Every rhetorical chapter includes a visual text — such as a photograph, a piece of fine art, or panels from a graphic novel — that provides an accessible introduction to each rhetorical pattern. Apparatus that helps students discuss the pattern in its visual form follows each image.

Thorough Coverage of Working with Sources

“Part Three: Working with Sources” takes students through the process of writing a research paper and includes a model student paper in MLA style. (The Appendix addresses APA style and includes a model APA paper.)

What’s New in This Edition

Engaging New Readings

The twenty-seven new professional essays treat topics of current interest. Deborah L. Rhode discusses “Why Looks Are the Last Bastion of Discrimination,” Paul H. Rubin makes a surprising case for “Environmentalism as Religion,” and Maria Hinojosa, in “A Supreme Sotomayor: How My Country Has Caught Up to Me,” shows how one judicial appointment has ramifications for all Latinas. In all cases, readings have been carefully selected for their high-interest subject matter as well as for their effectiveness as teachable models for student writing.

Argumentation Chapter Updated

The argumentation chapter now includes two new debates (“Are Internships Fair to Students?” and “Should American Citizenship Be a Birthright?”) and two new casebooks (“How Can We Address the Shortage of Organ Donors?” and “Should Government Tax Sugary Drinks?”).

More Support for Critical Reading

A new introductory chapter, “Reading to Write: Becoming a Critical Reader,” explains and illustrates the process of previewing, annotating, and summarizing and includes examples and exercises for active learning.

More Help with Research

Coverage of research has been expanded, with three full chapters in the new Part Three devoted to finding, evaluating, and integrating sources; avoiding plagiarism; and documenting sources in MLA style. Part Three includes exercises to help students practice their research skills as they learn. An Appendix, “Documenting Sources: APA,” explains APA style and includes a model student paper.

You Get More Digital Choices for *Patterns for College Writing*

Patterns for College Writing doesn’t stop with the book. Online, you’ll find both free and affordable premium resources to help students get even more out of the book and your course. You’ll also find convenient instructor resources, such as downloadable sample syllabi, classroom activities, and even a nationwide community of teachers. To learn more about or order any of the products below, contact your Bedford/St. Martin’s sales representative, email sales support (sales_support@bfwpub.com), or visit the Web site at bedfordstmartins.com.

Companion Web Site for *Patterns for College Writing* bedfordstmartins.com/patterns

Our companion Web site enables you to send students to free and open resources, choose flexible premium resources to supplement your print text, or upgrade to an expanding collection of innovative digital content.

Free and open resources for *Patterns for College Writing* provide students with easy-to-access reference materials, visual tutorials, and support for working with sources.

- Reading comprehension quizzes
- Debate topics
- Chapter-specific exercises
- Downloadable PDF files of the peer editing worksheets
- *Research and Documentation Online* by Diana Hacker, which offers research sources for more than thirty disciplines and documentation guidelines, models, and sample papers in MLA, APA, *Chicago*, and CSE styles

- *Bedford Bibliographer*: a tool for collecting source information and making a bibliography in MLA, APA, and *Chicago* styles

VideoCentral is a growing collection of videos for the writing class that captures real-world, academic, and student writers talking about how and why they write. *VideoCentral* can be packaged for free with *Patterns for College Writing*. An activation code is required. To order *VideoCentral* packaged with the print book, use ISBN 978-0-312-53975-7.

Re:Writing Plus gathers all of Bedford/St. Martin's premium digital content for composition into one online collection. It includes hundreds of model documents, the first ever peer review game, and *VideoCentral*. *Re:Writing Plus* can be purchased separately or packaged with the print book at a significant discount. An activation code is required. To order *Re:Writing Plus* packaged with the print book, use ISBN 978-0-312-53982-5.

A Variety of E-Book Options

An electronic edition of *Patterns for College Writing* is available in a variety of e-book formats that can be downloaded to a computer, tablet, or e-reader. Your students get the content you want in a convenient format — for about half the cost of a print book. We give you two options: our Bedford/St. Martin's e-book is optimized for reading and studying online, available from **bedfordstmartins.com/patterns**. Our CourseSmart e-book can be downloaded or used online, whichever is more convenient for your students. See **bedfordstmartins.com/ebooks** for details.

Instructor Resources

You have a lot to do in your course. Bedford/St. Martin's wants to make it easy for you to find the support you need — and to access it quickly.

Resources for Instructors Using *Patterns for College Writing* is available in PDF format that can be downloaded from the companion Web site at **bedfordstmartins.com/patterns**. In addition to chapter overviews and teaching tips, the Instructor's Manual includes sample syllabi and suggestions for classroom activities.

TeachingCentral (**bedfordstmartins.com/teachingcentral**) offers the entire list of Bedford/St. Martin's print and online professional resources in one place. You'll find landmark reference works, sourcebooks on pedagogical issues, award-winning collections, and practical advice for the classroom — all free for instructors.

Bits (**bedfordbits.com**) collects creative ideas for teaching a range of composition topics in an easily searchable blog. A community of teachers — leading scholars, authors, and editors — discuss revision, research, grammar and style, technology, peer review, and much more. Take, use, adapt, and pass the ideas around. Then, come back to the site to comment or share your own suggestion.

Content cartridges for the most common course management systems — Blackboard, WebCT, Angel, and Desire2Learn — allow you to easily download digital content for your course. To find the cartridges available with *Patterns for College Writing*, visit **bedfordstmartins.com/patterns/catalog**.

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Laurie G. Kirsznner
Stephen R. Mandell

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Heather Rogers, *The Hidden Life of Garbage* 188

“There’s a reason landfills are tucked away, on the edge of town, in otherwise untraveled terrain, camouflaged by hydroseeded, neatly tiered slopes. If people saw what happened to their waste, lived with the stench, witnessed the scale of destruction, they might start asking difficult questions. . . .”

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“Cutting the lines at the Department of Motor Vehicles to renew my driver’s license, getting out of speeding tickets, and arriving late to work without a reprimand are my ‘even uppers’ for my physical limitations and for the difficulties caused by establishments not complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

Judith Ortiz Cofer, *The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria* 232

“You can leave the island, master the English language, and travel as far as you can, but if you are a Latina, especially one like me who so obviously belongs to Rita Moreno’s gene pool, the island travels with you.”

Brent Staples, *Just Walk On By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space* 240

“It was in the echo of that terrified woman’s footfalls that I first began to know the unwieldy inheritance I’d come into — the ability to alter public space in ugly ways.”

Deborah L. Rhode, *Why Looks Are the Last Bastion of Discrimination* 246

“Among the key findings of a quarter-century’s worth of research: Unattractive people are less likely to be hired and promoted, and they earn lower salaries, even in fields in which looks have no obvious relationship to professional duties.”

Zev Chafets, *Let Steroids into the Hall of Fame* 253

“Purists say that steroids alter the game. But since the Hall opened its doors, baseball has never stopped changing. Batters now wear body padding and helmets. The pitcher’s mound has risen and fallen. Bats have more pop.”

Jamaica Kinkaid, “*Girl*” (Fiction) 258

“... this is how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this is how to love a man, and if this doesn’t work there are other ways, and if they don’t work don’t feel too bad about giving up ...”

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“My first view in the mirror blotted out the hurting. I’d seen some pretty conks, but when it’s the first time, on your *own* head, the transformation, after the lifetime of kinks, is staggering.”

Stanley Fish, *Getting Coffee Is Hard to Do* 286

“You will face a coordination problem if you are a general deploying troops, tanks, helicopters, food, tents, and medical supplies, or if you are the CEO of a large company juggling the demands of design, personnel, inventory, and production.

And these days, you will face a coordination problem if you want to get a cup of coffee.”

Joshua Piven, David Borgenicht, and Jennifer Worick, *How to Decorate Your Room When You're Broke* 290

"If you do not have a sewing machine, hem tape, or a needle and thread, use a stapler or duct tape to secure the T-shirt pieces together."

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"People can be executed in places like Shea Stadium before immense paying audiences. . . . As with all sports events, a certain ritual would seem inevitable and would quickly become an expected part of the occasion."

Jessica Mitford, *The Embalming of Mr. Jones* 303

"For those who have the stomach for it, let us part the formaldehyde curtain."

Shirley Jackson, *The Lottery* (Fiction) 311

"There was a great deal of fussing to be done before Mr. Summers declared the lottery open. There were the lists to make up — of heads of families, heads of households in each family, members of each household in each family."

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**PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: Cause and Effect** 336**Visual Text:** Louis Requena, *Major League Baseball Brawl* (Photo) 337**Norman Cousins, *Who Killed Benny Paret?*** 339

“‘They don’t come out to see a tea party,’ he said evenly. ‘They come out to see the knockout. They come out to see a man hurt. If they think anything else, they’re kidding themselves.’”

Stan Cox, *The Case against Air Conditioning* 344

“Less than half a century ago, America thrived with only the spottiest use of air conditioning. It could again.”

Lawrence Otis Graham, *The “Black Table” Is Still There* 349

“What did the table say about the integration that was supposedly going on in homerooms and gym classes? What did it say about the black kids? The white kids? What did it say about me when I refused to sit there, day after day, for three years?”

Linda M. Hasselstrom, *A Peaceful Woman Explains Why She Carries a Gun* 354

“People who have not grown up with the idea that they are capable of protecting themselves — in other words, most women — might have to work hard to convince themselves of their ability, and of the necessity. Handgun ownership need not turn us into gunslingers, but it can be part of believing in, and relying on, *ourselves* for protection.”

Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan, *Why Vampires Never Die* 361

“In a society that moves as fast as ours, where every week a new ‘blockbuster’ must be enthroned at the box office, or where idols are fabricated by consensus every new television season, the promise of something everlasting, something truly eternal, holds a special allure.”

Janice Mirikitani, *Suicide Note* (Poetry) 366

“I apologize.
Tasks do not come easily.
Each failure, a glacier.
Each disapproval, a footprint.
Each disappointment,
ice above my river.”

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Visual Texts: Auguste Rodin, *The Kiss*, and Robert Indiana, *LOVE* (Sculptures) 391

Bruce Catton, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts* 393

“When Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee met in the parlor of a modest house at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865, to work out the terms for the surrender of Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, a great chapter in American life came to a close, and a great new chapter began.”

Paul H. Rubin, *Environmentalism as Religion* 399

“Many observers have made the point that environmentalism is eerily close to a religious belief system, since it includes creation stories and ideas of original sin. But there is another sense in which environmentalism is becoming more and more like a religion: It provides its adherents with an identity.”

Bharati Mukherjee, *Two Ways to Belong in America* 404

“This is a tale of two sisters from Calcutta, Mira and Bharati, who have lived in the United States for some thirty-five years, but who find themselves on different sides in the current debate over the status of immigrants.”

Amy Chua, *Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior* 410

“Chinese parents can order their kids to get straight As. Western parents can only ask their kids to try their best. Chinese parents can say, “You’re lazy. All your classmates are getting ahead of you.” By contrast, Western parents have to struggle with their own conflicted feelings about achievement, and try to persuade themselves that they’re not disappointed about how their kids turned out.”

Ellen Laird, *I’m Your Teacher, Not Your Internet-Service Provider* 417

“The honeymoon is over. My romance with distance teaching is losing its spark.”

Deborah Tannen, *Sex, Lies, and Conversation* 423

“How can women and men have such different impressions of communication in marriage? Why the widespread imbalance in their interests and expectations?”

Gwendolyn Brooks, *Sadie and Maud* (Poetry) 430

“Maud went to college.
Sadie stayed at home.
Sadie scraped life
With a fine-tooth comb.”

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12 Classification and Division 435**What Is Classification and Division? 435**

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“What I wish for all students is some release from the clammy grip of the future. I wish them a chance to savor each segment of their education as an experience in itself and not as a grim preparation for the next step. I wish them the right to experiment, to trip and fall, to learn that defeat is as instructive as victory and is not the end of the world.”

Carolyn Foster Segal, *The Dog Ate My Disk, and Other Tales of Woe* 460

“With a show of energy and creativity that would be admirable if applied to the (missing) assignments in question, my students persist, week after week, semester after semester, year after year, in offering excuses about why their work is not ready. Those reasons fall into several broad categories: the family, the best friend, the evils of dorm life, the evils of technology, and the totally bizarre.”

Amy Tan, *Mother Tongue* 466

“I spend a great deal of my time thinking about the power of language — the way it can evoke an emotion, a visual image, a complex idea, or a simple truth. Language is the tool of my trade. And I use them all — all the Englishes I grew up with.”

Stephanie Ericsson, *The Ways We Lie* 474

“We lie. We all do. We exaggerate, we minimize, we avoid confrontation, we spare people’s feelings, we conveniently forget, we keep secrets, we justify lying to the big-guy institutions.”

Billy Collins, *Aristotle* (Poetry) 484

“This is the beginning.
Almost anything can happen.
This is where you find
the creation of light, a fish wriggling onto land,
the first word of *Paradise Lost* on an empty page.”

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Judy Brady, *I Want a Wife* 503

“My God, who *wouldn’t* want a wife?”

José Antonio Burciaga, *Tortillas* 507

“My earliest memory of *tortillas* is my *Mamá* telling me not to play with them. I had bitten eyeholes in one and was wearing it as a mask at the dinner table.”

Meghan Daum, *Fame-iness* 511

“Unlike actual fame, which involves some talent and hard work, ‘fame-iness’ requires little more than a willingness to humiliate oneself. Instead of a reward for a job well done, it’s more like a punishment for cutting corners. And guess what? The audience gets punished too.”

Gayle Rosenwald Smith, *The Wife-Beater* 516

“The *Oxford Dictionary* defines the term *wife-beater* as:

1. A man who physically abuses his wife and
2. Tank-style underwear shirts. Origin: based on the stereotype that physically abusive husbands wear that particular type of shirt.”

Amanda Brown, *Love and Other Catastrophes: A Mix Tape (Fiction)* 520

“‘Could This Be Love?’ (Bob Marley). ‘Love and Marriage’ (Frank Sinatra). ‘White Wedding’ (Billy Idol). ‘Stuck in the Middle with You’ (Stealers Wheel). ‘Tempted’ (Squeeze). ‘There Goes My Baby’ (The Drifters).”

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PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: Argumentation 550

Visual Text: American Civil Liberties Union, *Thanks to Modern Science . . .* (Ad) 551

Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence* 553

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848* 559

“The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.”

Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail* 566

“For years now I have heard the word ‘Wait!’ It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This ‘Wait’ has almost always meant ‘Never.’ We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that ‘justice too long delayed is justice denied.’ ”

■ **DEBATE:** *Are Internships Fair to Students?* 582

Anya Kamenetz, *“Take This Internship and Shove It”* 583

“So an internship doesn’t teach you everything you need to know about coping in today’s working world. What effect does it have on the economy as a whole?”

Jennifer Halperin, *No Pay? Many Interns Say, “No Problem”* 588

“The feeling I come away with is that unpaid internships are an important lesson in the concept of *caveat emptor*. As with any job, applicants should try to find out as much [as possible] ahead of time about the duties involved before signing on.”

■ DEBATE: *Should American Citizenship Be a Birthright?* 593Linda Chavez, *The Case for Birthright Citizenship* 595

“Since the abolition of slavery, we have never denied citizenship to any group of children born in the U.S. — even when we denied citizenship to their parents, as we did Asian immigrants from 1882 to 1943. This expansive view of who is an American has been critical to our successful assimilation of millions of newcomers.”

George F. Will, *An Argument to Be Made about Immigrant Babies and Citizenship* 600

“If those who wrote and ratified the Fourteenth Amendment *had* imagined laws restricting immigration — and had anticipated huge waves of illegal immigration — is it reasonable to presume they would have wanted to provide the reward of citizenship to the children of the violators of those laws? Surely not.”

■ CASEBOOK: *How Can We Address the Shortage of Organ Donors?* 605Alex Tabarrok, *The Meat Market* 607

“Many people find the idea of paying for organs repugnant but they do accept the ethical foundation of no give, no take — that those who are willing to give should be the first to receive.”

Scott Carney, *The Case for Mandatory Organ Donation* 614

“Setting up a mandatory system of organ donation would undoubtedly stir protests from around the country.”

Charles Krauthammer, *Yes, Let’s Pay for Organs* 620

“The prohibition we have today — no selling of any organs, from the living or the dead — is a fence against the commoditization of human parts. Laudable, but a fence too far.”

Virginia Postrel, *The Surgery Was Simple; the Process Is Another Story* 625

“You don’t have to be dead to give someone a kidney. You just have to be healthy and willing. Your body can function perfectly well with one kidney rather than two.”

■ CASEBOOK: *Should Government Tax Sugary Drinks?* 630Richard F. Daines, *A Tax That Invests in Our Health* 632

“Government steps in to serve the public when private markets fail. That’s why taxes are levied to pay for fire protection and safe highways, and why we’ve used taxes to decrease cigarette use.”

David Leonhardt, *Fat Tax* 636

“Most of the time, the government has no business doing such things. But there is really no other way to cure an epidemic.”

Daniel Engber, *Let Them Drink Water!* 641

“What’s disturbing is the thought that the degree of government control should vary according to who’s using which drug.”

Jeff Ousborne, *Does This Tax Make Me Look Fat?* 647

“Some policy wonks and pundits have proposed taxes on unhealthy food. Others prefer a more direct approach: a tax directly on the overweight.”

Writing Assignments for Argumentation 651

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PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: *Combining the Patterns* 663

Lars Eighner, *On Dumpster Diving* 664

“I have learned much as a scavenger. I mean to put some of what I have learned down here, beginning with the practical art of Dumpster diving and proceeding to the abstract.”

Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Shame Game* 680

“For those who fail to feel their full measure of shame over unemployment, there is an entire shame industry to whip them into shape: the career coaches, self-help books, motivational speakers, and business gurus who preach that whatever happens to you must be a result of your own ‘attitude.’”

David Kirby, *Inked Well* 685

“I used to think tattoos were for either lowlifes or those who wanted to pretend they were, but my mind now stands changed by the thoughtful, articulate people I talked to and the spectacular designs that had been inked into their bodies. In a word, tattoos are now officially OK by me.”

Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal* 692

“I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in fricassee or a ragout.”

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Introduction: How to Use This Book

This is a book of readings, but it is also a book about writing. Every reading selection here is followed by questions and exercises designed to help you become a thoughtful and proficient writer. The study questions that accompany the essays in this text encourage you to think critically about writers' ideas. Although some of the questions (particularly those listed under **Comprehension**) call for fairly straightforward, factual responses, other questions (particularly the **Journal Entry** assignments) invite more complex responses that reflect your individual reaction to the selections.

On the following page, “What’s in a Name?” by Henry Louis Gates Jr., is typical of the essays in this text. It is preceded by a **headnote** that gives readers information about the author’s life and career. This headnote includes a **background** section that provides a social, historical, and cultural context for the essay.

HENRY LOUIS GATES JR.

“What’s in a Name?”

Henry Louis Gates Jr. was born in 1950 in Keyser, West Virginia, and grew up in the small town of Piedmont. Currently W. E. B. Du Bois Professor of Humanities and director of the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African-American Research at Harvard, he has edited many collections of works by African-American writers and published several volumes of literary criticism. However, he is probably best known as a social critic whose books and articles for a general audience explore a wide variety of issues and themes, often focusing on race and culture. In the following essay, which originally appeared in the journal *Dissent*, Gates recalls a childhood experience that occurred during the mid-1950s.

Background on the civil rights movement In the mid-1950s, the first stirrings of the civil rights movement were under way, and in 1954 and 1955 the U.S. Supreme Court handed down decisions declaring racial segregation unconstitutional in public schools. Still, much of the country — particularly the South — remained largely segregated until Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin in businesses (including restaurants and theaters) covered by interstate commerce laws, as well as in employment. This was followed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which guaranteed equal access to the polls, and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which prohibited discrimination in housing and real estate. At the time of the experience Gates recalls here — before these laws were enacted — prejudice and discrimination against African Americans were the norm in many communities, including those outside the South.

The question of color takes up much space in these pages, but the question of color, especially in this country, operates to hide the graver questions of the self.

— JAMES BALDWIN, 1961

. . . blood, darky, Tar Baby, Kaffir, shine . . . moor, blackamoor, Jim Crow, spook . . . quadroon, meriney, red bone, high yellow . . . Mammy, porch monkey, home, homeboy, George . . . spearchucker, schwarze, Leroy, Smokey . . . mouli, buck. Ethiopian, brother, sistah.

— TREY ELLIS, 1989

I had forgotten the incident completely, until I read Trey Ellis’s essay ¹ “Remember My Name” in a recent issue of the *Village Voice* (June 13, 1989). But there, in the middle of an extended italicized list of the bynames of “the race” (“the race” or “our people” being the terms my parents used in polite or reverential discourse, “jigaboo” or “nigger” more commonly used in anger, jest, or pure disgust), it was: “George.” Now the events of that very brief exchange return to mind so vividly that I wonder why I had forgotten it.

My father and I were walking home at dusk from his second job. He 2
 "moonlighted" as a janitor in the evenings for the telephone company. Every day but Saturday, he would come home at 3:30 from his regular job at the paper mill, wash up, eat supper, then at 4:30 head downtown to his second job. He used to make jokes frequently about a union official who moonlighted. I never got the joke, but he and his friends thought it was hilarious. All I knew was that my family always ate well, that my brother and I had new clothes to wear, and that all of the white people in Piedmont, West Virginia, treated my parents with an odd mixture of resentment and respect that even we understood at the time had something directly to do with a small but certain measure of financial security.

He had left a little early that evening because I was with him and I had 3
 to be in bed early. I could not have been more than five or six, and we had stopped off at the Cut-Rate Drug Store (where no black person in town but my father could sit down to eat, and eat off real plates with real silverware) so that I could buy some caramel ice cream, two scoops in a wafer cone, please, which I was busy licking when Mr. Wilson walked by.

Mr. Wilson was a very quiet man, whose stony, brooding, silent manner 4
 seemed designed to scare off any overtures of friendship, even from white people. He was Irish, as was one-third of our village (another third being Italian), the more affluent among whom sent their children to "Catholic School" across the bridge in Maryland. He had white straight hair, like my Uncle Joe, whom he uncannily resembled, and he carried a black worn metal lunch pail, the kind that Riley* carried on the television show. My father always spoke to him, and for reasons that we never did understand, he always spoke to my father.

"Hello, Mr. Wilson," I heard my father say. 5

"Hello, George." 6

I stopped licking my ice cream cone, and asked my Dad in a loud voice 7
 why Mr. Wilson had called him "George."

"Doesn't he know your name, Daddy? Why don't you tell him your 8
 name? Your name isn't George."

For a moment I tried to think of who Mr. Wilson was mixing Pop up 9
 with. But we didn't have any Georges among the colored people in Piedmont; nor were there colored Georges living in the neighboring towns and working at the mill.

"Tell him your name, Daddy." 10

"He knows my name, boy," my father said after a long pause. "He calls 11
 all colored people George."

A long silence ensued. It was "one of those things," as my Mom would 12
 put it. Even then, that early, I knew when I was in the presence of "one of those things," one of those things that provided a glimpse, through a

* Eds. note — The lead character in the 1950s television program *The Life of Riley*, about a white working-class family and their neighbors.

rent curtain, at another world that we could not affect but that affected us. There would be a painful moment of silence, and you would wait for it to give way to a discussion of a black superstar such as Sugar Ray or Jackie Robinson.

“Nobody hits better in a clutch than Jackie Robinson.”

“That’s right. Nobody.”

I never again looked Mr. Wilson in the eye.

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Responding to an Essay

The study questions that follow each essay in this text will help you to **think critically** about what you are reading — that is, to ask questions and draw conclusions. (Critical thinking and reading are discussed in Chapter 1 of this book.) Five types of questions follow each essay:

- *Comprehension* questions help you to measure your understanding of what the writer is saying.
- *Purpose and Audience* questions ask you to consider why, and for whom, each selection was written and to examine the implications of the writer’s choices in view of a particular purpose or intended audience.
- *Style and Structure* questions encourage you to examine the decisions the writer has made about elements such as arrangement of ideas, paragraphing, sentence structure, word choice, and imagery.
- *Vocabulary Projects* ask you to define certain words, to consider the connotations of others, and to examine the writer’s reasons for selecting particular words or patterns of language.
- *Journal Entry* assignments ask you to write a short, informal response to what you read and to speculate freely about related ideas — perhaps exploring ethical issues raised by the selection or offering your opinions about the writer’s statements. Briefer, less polished, and less structured than full-length essays, journal entries may suggest ideas for more formal kinds of writing.

Following these sets of questions are three additional features:

- *Writing Workshop* assignments ask you to write essays structured according to the pattern of development explained and illustrated in the chapter.
- *Combining the Patterns* questions focus on the various patterns of development — other than the essay’s dominant pattern — that the writer uses. These questions ask why a writer uses particular patterns (narration, description, exemplification, process, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification and division, definition), what each pattern contributes to the essay, and what other choices the writer might have had.

- *Thematic Connections* identify other readings in this book that explore similar themes. Reading these related works will enhance your understanding and appreciation of the original work and perhaps give you material to write about.

Following are some examples of study questions and possible responses, as well as a **Writing Workshop** assignment and **Thematic Connections**, for "What's in a Name?" (page 2). The numbers in parentheses after quotations refer to the paragraphs in which the quotations appear.

Comprehension

1. In paragraph 1, Gates wonders why he forgot about the exchange between his father and Mr. Wilson. Why do you think he forgot about it?

Gates may have forgotten about the incident simply because it was something that happened a long time ago or because such incidents were commonplace when he was a child. Alternatively, he may *not* have forgotten the exchange between his father and Mr. Wilson but pushed it out of his mind because he found it so painful. (After all, he says he never again looked Mr. Wilson in the eye.)

2. How is the social status of Gates's family different from that of other African-American families in Piedmont, West Virginia? How does Gates account for this difference?

Gates's family is different from other African-American families in town in that they are treated with "an odd mixture of resentment and respect" (2) by whites. Although other blacks are not permitted to eat at the drugstore, Mr. Gates is. Gates attributes this social status to his family's "small but certain measure of financial security" (2). Even so, when Mr. Wilson insults Mr. Gates, the privileged status of the Gates family is revealed as a sham.

3. What does Gates mean when he says, "It was 'one of those things,' as my Mom would put it" (12)?

Gates's comment indicates that the family learned to see such mistreatment as routine. In context, the word *things* in paragraph 12 refers to the kind of incident that gives Gates and his family a glimpse of the way the white world operates.

4. Why does Gates's family turn to a discussion of a "black superstar" after a "painful moment of silence" (12) such as the one he describes?

Although Gates does not explain the family's behavior, we can infer that they speak of African-American heroes like prizefighter Sugar Ray Robinson and baseball player Jackie Robinson to make themselves feel better. Such discussions are a way of balancing the negative images of African Americans created by incidents such as the one Gates describes and of bolstering the low self-esteem the family felt as a result. These heroes seem to have won the respect denied to the Gates family; to mention them is to participate vicariously in their glory.

5. Why do you think Gates "never again looked Mr. Wilson in the eye" (15)?

Gates may have felt that Mr. Wilson was somehow the enemy, not to be trusted, because he had insulted Gates's father. Or, he may have been

ashamed to look him in the eye because he believed his father should have insisted on being addressed properly.

Purpose and Audience

1. *Why do you think Gates introduces his narrative with the two quotations he selects? How do you suppose he expects his audience to react to them? How do you react?*

Gates begins with two quotations, both by African-American writers, written nearly thirty years apart. Baldwin's words seem to suggest that, in the United States, "the question of color" is a barrier to understanding "the graver questions of the self." That is, the labels *black* and *white* may mask more fundamental characteristics or issues. Ellis's list of names (many pejorative) for African Americans illustrates the fact that epithets can dehumanize people — they can, in effect, rob a person of his or her "self." This issue of the discrepancy between a name and what lies behind it is central to Gates's essay. In one sense, then, Gates begins with these two quotations because they are relevant to the issues he will discuss. More specifically, he is using the two quotations — particularly Ellis's shocking string of unpleasant names — to arouse interest in his topic and provide an intellectual and emotional context for his story. He may also be intending to make his white readers uncomfortable and his black readers angry. How you react depends on your attitudes about race (and perhaps about language).

2. *What is the point of Gates's narrative? That is, why does he recount the incident?*

Certainly Gates wishes to make readers aware of the awkward, and potentially dangerous, position of his father (and, by extension, of other African Americans) in a small southern town in the 1950s. He also shows us how names help to shape people's perceptions and actions: as long as Mr. Wilson can call all black men "George," he can continue to see them as insignificant and treat them as inferiors. The title of the piece suggests that the way names shape perceptions is the writer's main point.

3. *The title of this selection, which Gates places in quotation marks, is an allusion to act 2, scene 2, of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Juliet says, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet." Why do you think Gates chose this title? Does he expect his audience to recognize the quotation?*

Because his work was originally published in a journal read by a well-educated audience, Gates would have expected readers to recognize the **allusion** (and also to know a good deal about 1950s race relations).

Although Gates could not have been certain that all members of this audience would recognize the reference to *Romeo and Juliet*, he could have been reasonably sure that if they did, it would enhance their understanding of the selection. In Shakespeare's play, the two lovers are kept apart essentially because of their names: she is a Capulet and he is a Montague, and the two families are involved in a bitter feud. In the speech from which Gates takes the title quotation, Juliet questions the logic of such a situation. In her view, what a person is called should not determine how he or she is regarded — and this, of course, is Gates's point as well. Even if readers do not recognize the allusion, the title still foreshadows the selection's focus on names.

Style and Structure

1. *Does paragraph 1 add something vital to the narrative, or would Gates's story make sense without the introduction? Could another kind of introduction work as well?*

Gates's first paragraph supplies the context in which the incident is to be read — that is, it makes clear that Mr. Wilson's calling Mr. Gates "George" was not an isolated incident but part of a pattern of behavior that allowed those in positions of power to mistreat those they considered inferior. For this reason, it is an effective introduction. Although the narrative would make sense without paragraph 1, the story's full impact would probably not be as great. Still, Gates could have begun differently. For example, he could have started with the incident itself (paragraph 2) and interjected his comments about the significance of names later in the piece. He also could have begun with the exchange of dialogue in paragraphs 5 through 11 and then introduced the current paragraph 1 to supply the incident's context.

2. *What does the use of dialogue contribute to the narrative? Would the selection have a different impact without dialogue? Explain.*

Gates was five or six years old when the incident occurred, and the dialogue helps to establish the child's innocence as well as his father's quiet acceptance of the situation. In short, the dialogue is a valuable addition to the piece because it creates two characters, one innocent and one resigned to injustice, both of whom contrast with the voice of the adult narrator: wise, worldly, but also angry and perhaps ashamed, the voice of a man who has benefited from the sacrifices of men like Gates's father.

3. *Why do you think Gates supplies the specific details he chooses in paragraphs 2 and 3? In paragraph 4? Is all this information necessary?*

The details Gates provides in paragraphs 2 and 3 help to establish the status of his family in Piedmont; because readers have this information, the fact that the family was ultimately disregarded and discounted by some whites emerges as deeply ironic. The information in paragraph 4 also contributes to this **irony**. Here we learn that Mr. Wilson was not liked by many whites, that he looked like Gates's Uncle Joe, and that he carried a lunch box — in other words, that he had no special status in the town apart from that conferred by race.

Vocabulary Projects

1. *Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection:*

bynames (1) — nicknames
 measure (2) — extent or degree
 uncannily (4) — strangely
 ensued (12) — followed
 rent (12) — torn

2. *Consider the connotations of the words colored and black, both used by Gates to refer to African Americans. What different associations does each word have? Why does Gates use both — for example, colored in paragraph 9 and black in paragraph 12? What is your response to the father's use of the term boy in paragraph 11?*

In the 1950s, when the incident Gates describes took place, the term *colored* was still widely used, along with *Negro*, to designate Americans of

African descent. In the 1960s, the terms *Afro-American* and *black* replaced the earlier names, with *black* emerging as the preferred term and remaining dominant through the 1980s. Today, although *black* is preferred by some, *African American* is used more and more often. Because the term *colored* is the oldest designation, it may seem old-fashioned and even racist today; *black*, which connoted a certain degree of militancy in the 1960s, is probably now considered a neutral term by most people. Gates uses both words because he is speaking from two time periods. In paragraph 9, recreating the thoughts and words of a child in a 1950s southern town, he uses the term *colored*; in paragraph 12, the adult Gates, commenting in 1989 on the incident, uses *black*. The substitution of *African American* for the older terms might give the narrative a more contemporary flavor, but it might also seem awkward or forced — and, in paragraph 9, inappropriately formal. As far as the term *boy* is concerned, different readers are apt to have different responses. Although the father's use of the term can be seen as affectionate, it can also be seen as derisive in this context since it echoes the bigot's use of *boy* for all black males, regardless of age or accomplishments.

Journal Entry

Do you think Gates's parents should have used experiences like the one in "What's in a Name?" to educate him about the family's social status in the community? Why do you think they chose instead to dismiss such incidents as "one of those things" (12)?

Your responses to these questions will reflect your own opinions, based on your background and experiences as well as on your interpretation of the reading selection.

Writing Workshop

Write about a time when you, like Gates's father, could have spoken out in protest but chose not to. Would you make the same decision today?

By the time you approach the Writing Workshop assignments, you will have read an essay, responded to study questions about it, discussed it in class, and perhaps considered its relationship to other essays in the text. Often, your next step will be to write an essay in response to one of the Writing Workshop questions. (Chapters 2–4 follow Laura Bobnak, a first-year composition student, through the process of writing an essay in response to this Writing Workshop assignment.)

Combining the Patterns

*Although **narration** is the pattern of development that dominates "What's in a Name?" and gives it its structure, Gates also uses **exemplification**, presenting an extended example to support his thesis. What is this example? What does it illustrate? Would several brief examples have been more convincing?*

The extended example is the story of the encounter between Gates's father and Mr. Wilson, which compellingly illustrates the kind of behavior African Americans were often forced to adopt in the 1950s. Because

Gates’s introduction focuses on “the incident” (1), one extended example is enough (although he alludes to other incidents in paragraph 12).

Thematic Connections

- “‘Girl’” (page 258)
- “The ‘Black Table’ Is Still There” (page 349)

As you read and think about the selections in this text, you should begin to see thematic links among them. Such parallels can add to your interest and understanding as well as give you ideas for class discussion and writing.

For example, Jamaica Kincaid’s short story “Girl,” also by an African-American writer, has some parallels with Gates’s autobiographical essay. Like Gates, Kincaid’s protagonist seems to occupy a subservient position in a society whose rules she must obey. The lessons in life skills that are enumerated in the story are also similar to the lesson Gates learns from his father.

Another related work is Lawrence Otis Graham’s “The ‘Black Table’ Is Still There.” The writer, an African-American man, returns in 1991 to his junior high school, where he sees the lunch tables as segregated as they were when he was a student there. Unlike Gates’s essay, which discusses a specific incident that took place in the South in the 1950s, Graham’s examines an ongoing situation that may apply to schools all over the United States. Thus, it provides a more contemporary — and, perhaps, wider — context for discussing issues of race and class.

In the process of thinking about Gates’s narrative, discussing it in class, or preparing to write an essay on a related topic (such as the one listed under Writing Workshop on page 8), you might find it useful to read Kincaid’s story and Graham’s essay.

Responding to Other Texts

The first selection in Chapters 6 through 14 of this book is a visual text. It is followed by **Reading Images** questions, a **Journal Entry**, and a short list of **Thematic Connections** that will help you understand the image and shape your response to it.

The final selection in each chapter, a story or poem, is followed by **Reading Literature** questions, a **Journal Entry**, and **Thematic Connections**.

NOTE: At the end of each chapter, **Writing Assignments** offer additional practice in writing essays structured according to a particular pattern of development, and a **Collaborative Activity** suggests an idea for a group project.

PART ONE

The Writing Process

Every reading selection in this book is the result of a struggle between a writer and his or her material. If a writer's struggle is successful, the finished work is welded together without a visible seam, and readers have no sense of the frustration the writer experienced while rearranging ideas or hunting for the right word. Writing is no easy business, even for a professional writer. Still, although there is no simple formula for good writing, some approaches are easier and more productive than others.

At this point you may be asking yourself, "So what? What has this got to do with me? I'm not a professional writer." True enough, but during the next few years you will be doing a good deal of writing. Throughout your college career, you will write midterms, final exams, lab reports, essays, and research papers. In your professional life, you may write progress reports, proposals, business correspondence, and memos. As diverse as these tasks are, they have something in common: they can be made easier if you are familiar with the stages of the **writing process** — a process experienced writers follow when they write.

THE WRITING PROCESS

- **Invention** (also called **prewriting**) During invention, you decide what to write about and gather information to support or explain what you want to say.
- **Arrangement** During arrangement, you decide how you are going to organize your ideas.
- **Drafting and revising** During drafting and revising, you write several drafts as you reconsider your ideas and refine your style and structure.
- **Editing and proofreading** During editing, you focus on grammar and punctuation as well as on sentence style and word choice. During proofreading, you correct spelling, mechanical errors, and typos and check your essay's format.

Although the writing process is usually presented as a series of neatly defined steps, that model does not reflect the way people actually write. Ideas do not always flow easily, and the central point you set out to develop does not always wind up in the essay you ultimately write. In addition, writing often progresses in fits and starts, with ideas occurring sporadically or not at all. Surprisingly, much good writing occurs when a writer gets stuck or confused but continues to work until ideas begin to take shape.

Because the writing process is so erratic, its stages overlap. Most writers engage in invention, arrangement, drafting and revision, and editing simultaneously — finding ideas, considering possible methods of organization, looking for the right words, and correcting grammar and punctuation all at the same time. In fact, writing is such an idiosyncratic process that no two writers approach the writing process in exactly the same way. Some people outline; others do not. Some take elaborate notes during the invention stage; others keep track of everything in their heads.

The writing process discussed throughout this book reflects the many choices writers make at various stages of composition. But regardless of writers' different approaches, one thing is certain: the more you write, the better acquainted you will become with your personal writing process and the better you will learn how to modify it to suit various writing tasks. The four chapters that follow, which treat individual stages of the writing process, will help you define your needs as a writer and understand your options as you approach writing assignments in college and beyond.

Reading to Write: Becoming a Critical Reader

On a purely practical level, you will read the selections in this text to answer study questions and prepare for class discussions (and, often, for writing). More significantly, however, you will also read to evaluate the ideas of others, to form judgments, and to develop original viewpoints. In other words, you will engage in **critical reading**.

By introducing you to new ideas and new ways of thinking about familiar concepts, reading prepares you to respond critically to the ideas of others and to develop ideas of your own. When you read critically, you can form opinions, exchange insights with others in conversation, ask and answer questions, and develop ideas that can be further explored in writing. For all of these reasons, critical reading is a vital part of your education.

Understanding Critical Reading

Reading is a two-way street. Readers are presented with a writer's ideas, but they also bring their own ideas to what they read. After all, readers have different national, ethnic, cultural, and geographic backgrounds and different kinds of knowledge and experiences, so they may react differently to a particular essay or story. For example, readers from an economically and ethnically homogeneous suburban neighborhood may have difficulty understanding a story about class conflict, but they may also be more objective than readers who are struggling with such conflict in their own lives.

These differences in readers' responses do not mean that every interpretation is acceptable, that an essay or story or poem may mean whatever a reader wants it to mean. Readers must make sure they are not distorting a writer's words, overlooking (or ignoring) significant details, or seeing

things in an essay or story that do not exist. It is not important for all readers to agree on a particular interpretation of a work. It *is* important, however, for each reader to develop an interpretation that the work itself supports.

When you read an essay in this text, or any reading selection that you expect to discuss in class, you should read it carefully, ideally more than once. If a selection is accompanied by a headnote or other background material, as the selections in this book are, you should read this material as well because it will help you to understand the selection. Keep in mind that some of the selections you read may eventually be used as sources for writing. In these cases, it is especially important that you understand what you are reading and can formulate a thoughtful response to the writer's ideas. (For information on how to evaluate the sources you read, see Chapter 16.)



TECH TIP: Naming Your Files

If you take notes about your sources on your computer, it's important to give each file an accurate and descriptive title so you can find it when you need it. Your file name should identify the class for which you're writing and the due date.

Comp-Plagiarism essay-9.25

Once you develop a system that works for you, you should use it consistently — for example, always listing elements (class, assignment, date) in the same order for each project. You can also create a separate folder for each class and then use subfolders for each assignment, gathering together all your notes and drafts for an assignment.

To get the most out of your reading, you should use **active reading** strategies. In practical terms, this means actively participating in the reading process: approaching an assigned reading with a clear understanding of your purpose and marking the text to help you understand what you are reading.

Determining Your Purpose

Even before you start reading, you should ask yourself some questions about your **purpose** — why you are reading. The answers to these questions will help you understand what kind of information you hope to get out of your reading and how you will use this information.



CHECKLIST

Questions about Your Purpose

- Will you be expected to discuss what you are reading? If so, will you discuss it in class? In a conference with your instructor?
- Will you have to write about what you are reading? If so, will you be expected to write an informal response (for example, a journal entry) or a more formal one (for example, an essay)?
- Will you be tested on the material?

Previewing

When you **preview**, you try to get a sense of the writer's main idea, key supporting points, and general emphasis. You can begin by focusing on the title, the first paragraph (which often contains a purpose statement or overview), and the last paragraph (which may contain a summary of the writer's main idea). You should also look for clues to the writer's message in the passage's **visual signals** and **verbal signals**.

Using Visual Signals

- Look at the title.
- Look at the opening and closing paragraphs.
- Look at each paragraph's first sentence.
- Look for headings.
- Look for *italicized* and **boldfaced** words.
- Look for numbered lists.
- Look for bulleted lists (like this one).
- Look at any visuals (graphs, charts, tables, photographs, and so on).
- Look at any information that is boxed.
- Look at any information that is in color.

Using Verbal Signals

- Look for phrases that signal emphasis ("The *primary* reason"; "The *most important* idea").
- Look for repeated words and phrases.
- Look for words that signal addition (*also, in addition, furthermore*).
- Look for words that signal time sequence (*first, after, then, next, finally*).
- Look for words that identify causes and effects (*because, as a result, for this reason*).
- Look for words that introduce examples (*for example, for instance*).
- Look for words that signal comparison (*likewise, similarly*).
- Look for words that signal contrast (*unlike, although, in contrast*).
- Look for words that signal contradiction (*however, on the contrary*).
- Look for words that signal a narrowing of the writer's focus (*in fact, specifically, in other words*).
- Look for words that signal summaries or conclusions (*to sum up, in conclusion*).

When you have finished previewing the passage, you should have a general sense of what the writer wants to communicate.

As you read and reread, you will record your reactions in writing. These notations will help you to understand the writer's ideas and your own thoughts about those ideas. Every reader develops a different system of recording responses, but many readers learn to use a combination of *highlighting* and *annotating*.

Keep in mind that the process of highlighting and annotating that will be explained and illustrated in the pages that follow is not an end in itself

but a step toward fully understanding what you have read. Annotations suggest questions; in your search for answers, you may ask your instructor for clarification, or you may raise particularly puzzling or provocative points during class discussion or in a study group meeting. After your questions have been answered, you will be able to discuss and write about what you have read with greater accuracy, confidence, and authority.

Highlighting

When you **highlight**, you mark the text. You might, for example, underline (or double underline) important concepts, box key terms, number a series of related points, circle an unfamiliar word (or place a question mark beside it), draw a vertical line in the margin beside a particularly interesting passage, draw arrows to connect related points, or star discussions of the work's central issues or main idea.

The following pages reprint a column by journalist Brent Staples that focuses on the issue of plagiarism among college students. The column, "Cutting and Pasting: A Senior Thesis by (Insert Name)," and the accompanying headnote and background material, have been highlighted by a student.

BRENT STAPLES

Cutting and Pasting: A Senior Thesis by (Insert Name)

Born in 1951 in Chester, Pennsylvania, Brent Staples is a writer and member of the editorial board of the *New York Times*. He often writes about culture, politics, race, and education. Staples has a B.A. in behavioral science from Widener University and a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Chicago. Before joining the *New York Times*, he wrote for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago Reader*, *Chicago Magazine*, and the jazz magazine *Down Beat*. His work has also appeared in publications such as *Ms.* and *Harper's*. Staples is the author of a memoir, *Parallel Time: Growing Up in Black and White* (1994).

Background on prevalence of cheating and plagiarism in high school and college Recent studies suggest that high school and college students are increasingly likely to cheat or plagiarize. For example, one Duke University study conducted from 2002 to 2005 showed that 70 percent of the 50,000 undergraduate students surveyed admitted to cheating on occasion. A 2008 survey of high school students by the Center for Youth Ethics at the Josephson Institute showed that 82 percent had copied from another student's work, while 36 percent said that they had used the Internet to plagiarize an assignment. Moreover, students tend to view such academic dishonesty with indifference: according to surveys by the Center for Academic Integrity, only 29 percent of undergraduates believe unattributed copying from the Web rises to the level of "serious cheating."

Observers have proposed various reasons for the prevalence of plagiarism. Some point to new technologies that allow instant access to an apparently ① "common" store of unlimited information, as sites like Wikipedia challenge traditional notions of singular authorship, originality, and intellectual property. Others see the problem as the result of declining personal morality and of a ② culture that rewards shady behavior. And many view plagiarism as the unavoidable ③ consequence of the pressures many students feel.

Academic institutions have responded to the problem in a number of ways. Most colleges now use the Internet-based detection service Turnitin.com, which scans students' essays for plagiarism. But a recent study by the National Bureau of Economic Research concluded that simply showing a Web tutorial on the issue could reduce instances of plagiarism by two-thirds. Schools such as Duke University and Bowdoin College now require incoming students to complete this online instruction before they enroll. Additionally, the research of Rutgers professor Ronald McCabe, who founded the Center for Academic Integrity, indicates that honor codes — already in place at many colleges and universities — help create a campus culture of academic integrity.

A friend who teaches at a well-known eastern university told me recently that plagiarism was turning him into a cop. He begins the semester collecting evidence, in the form of an in-class essay that gives him a sense of how well students think and write. He looks back at the samples later when students turn in papers that feature their own, less-than-perfect prose alongside expertly written passages lifted verbatim from the Web.

"I have to assume that in every class, someone will do it," he said. "It doesn't stop them if you say, 'This is plagiarism. I won't accept it.' I have to tell them that it is a failing offense and could lead me to file a complaint with the university, which could lead to them being put on probation or being asked to leave."

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As my friend sees it: "This represents a shift away from the view of education as the process of intellectual engagement through which we learn to think critically and toward the view of education as mere training. In training, you are trying to find the right answer at any cost, not trying to improve your mind."

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here is not the moral issue. The problem is that kids don't learn if they don't do the work."

Prof. Pritchard and his colleagues illustrated the point in a study of cheating behavior by M.I.T. students who used an online system to complete homework. The students who were found to have copied the most answers from others started out with the same math and physics skills as their harder-working classmates. But by skipping the actual work in homework, they fell behind in understanding and became significantly more likely to fail.

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If we look closely at plagiarism as practiced by youngsters, we can see that they have a different relationship to the printed word than did the generations before them. When many young people think of writing, they don't think of fashioning original sentences into a sustained thought. They think of making something like a collage of found passages and ideas from the Internet.

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This habit of mind is already pervasive in the culture and will be difficult to roll back. But parents, teachers, and policy makers need to understand that this is not just a matter of personal style or generational expression. It's a question of whether we can preserve the methods through which education at its best teaches people to think critically and originally.

. . .

The student who highlighted Staples's column and its accompanying material was preparing for a class discussion of a group of related articles on the problem of academic cheating. To prepare for class, she began by using a variety of symbols, including underlining and asterisks, to identify the writer's key ideas and mark points she might want to think further about. This highlighting laid the groundwork for the careful annotations she would make when she reread the article.

Exercise 1

Preview the following article. Then, highlight it to identify the writer's main idea and key supporting points. (Previewing and highlighting the article's headnote and background material will help you to understand the article's ideas.) You might circle unfamiliar words, underline key terms or concepts, or draw lines or arrows to connect related ideas.

MARIA HINOJOSA

A Supreme Sotomayor: How My Country Has Caught Up to Me

Broadcast journalist Maria Hinojosa currently hosts the newsmagazine show “Maria Hinojosa: One-on-One” and serves as senior correspondent for “NOW” — both on PBS. She was born in Mexico City in 1961 and earned an undergraduate degree from Barnard College in New York City. A winner of the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, Hinojosa has also worked for CBS, CNN, and other broadcast outlets. She is the author of *Crews: Gang Members Talk to Maria Hinojosa* (1995) and *Raising Paul: Adventures Raising Myself and My Son* (2000).

Background on Female Supreme Court Justices Although Justice Sonia Sotomayor is the first Latin American to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court, she is not the first woman on the Court. In 1981, President Ronald Reagan nominated Sandra Day O'Connor as the first female associate justice; generally viewed as a moderate “swing vote” on many controversial issues, including abortion, she served until her retirement in 2006. Sotomayor is also not the *only* female justice on the Supreme Court. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, nominated in 1993 by President Bill Clinton, and Elena Kagan, nominated in 2010 by Barack Obama, both now serve on the Court. As these appointments have broken the long tradition of males on the Supreme Court, many observers have begun to discuss the role that race, gender, religion, class, and ethnicity may play in future Supreme Court decisions.

The phone call came just minutes after Sonia Sotomayor was nominated by President Barack Obama to the Supreme Court. Rose Arce, my former producer at CNN and a Peruvian-American, told me the news. I let out an excited shout: *What!?!?*

Though Sonia Sotomayor had all of the qualifications, I was truly not expecting to hear the news and could scarcely believe it. Do we really have a Puerto Rican woman from the South Bronx nominated to serve on SCOTUS? Like they say on “Saturday Night Live” — really? No! *Really?*

My friends — accomplished lawyers, a newspaper publisher, reporters of the highest caliber — were all asking, “Are we dreaming?” We all needed reassurance. My high-powered Latina friends are not just Puerto Rican. They are Mexican, Colombian, Cuban, Dominican, and more. And now a woman just like us is being nominated for the highest court of the land. I ask again: Really?

I cannot begin to imagine all the tears shed by Latinas across this country on Tuesday. This nomination, like nothing before it, has made it finally clear that we exist as intellectual arbiters in our America. We exist as

powerbrokers. It is a dynamic we are working hard to grasp and own and make real. Sotomayor has made it real for all of us.

All this unity notwithstanding, this nomination has the deepest and 5 most profound meaning for my Puerto Rican sisters. Stereotypes of Puerto Rican women from NYC run so deep in our popular culture. I can still hear Mick Jagger singing, “We’re gonna come around at 12 with some Puerto Rican girls that are just dyin’ to meet you. We’re gonna bring a case of wine. Hey, let’s go mess and fool around. You know, like we used to.”

My Puerto Rican hermanas know that on some level they have always 6 been fighting against a pervasive image. They are brilliant and accomplished but oftentimes minimized to a mere stereotype that is disconnected from reality.

What President Obama has done for men of color, Sonia Sotomayor 7 will do for Puerto Rican women. She will forever and profoundly change the image of what a “Puerto Rican girl” really is.

I myself was used to being the “first” — the first Latina hired at NPR in 8 Washington, D.C.; the first Latina correspondent for CNN; the first Latina anchor and correspondent for PBS. The new paradigm is that we are now going beyond “firsts.” Just look at Sotomayor — she’s got that wavy-hair-with-the-big-earrings thing. She wears bright colors. She smiles broadly and she means it! She could be me! My 11-year-old daughter sees her on TV and remarks that Sotomayor looks “a lot like Mami’s friends.”

I want my daughter to avoid this image popular culture has main- 9 tained about Puerto Rican women and Latinas in general. This is why I take my daughter to maligned and misunderstood barrios, and why she hangs out with me and my high-powered Latina sisters. She can see what is real and what is not; she is living it.

Sotomayor’s stomping ground of the South Bronx — no stranger to 10 vicious stereotyping — also produced MacArthur Genius Award-winning environmentalist Majora Carter and Emmy-nominated musician Bobby Sanabria (only the beginning of a long list of erudite South Bronxers). In the true South Bronx, the sounds of conga playing in the middle of the night are welcomed as a sign of joy and passion, not bothersome noise. The true South Bronx is populated by bustling families and kids on their way to work and school who for decades bravely endured and pushed through the drug dealers and users who flooded the neighborhood.

That is the essence of who Sonia Sotomayor is. She pushed through. 11 She stayed focused. She worked hard. She never closed the doors on herself, like so many strong women of color sometimes do. . . .

Sotomayor will also hopefully break down stereotypes Mexicanos and 12 other Latinos have about Puerto Ricans. Those groups listen to the Rolling Stones too.

This Friday night I will go to a Cuban playwright’s brownstone in Span- 13 ish Harlem, where we will listen to El Gran Combo and toast a Latina who has “made it.” My daughter will be with me. And while I remain stunned by the shocking reality of my country so quickly changing to reflect me and my reality, I am sure my daughter won’t have it. My America was always, at

best, a place of hopeful change. In her America, a black man can and does become president; a Latina can and does end up on the Supreme Court.

And so this is how it feels to be living in a time of change — feeling the bumps of transformation like sudden conga beats in the night, beats that surprise at first, but ones I ultimately welcome with joy and hope.

• • •

Annotating

When you **annotate**, you carry on a conversation with the text. In marginal notes, you can ask questions, suggest possible parallels with other reading selections or with your own experiences, argue with the writer's points, comment on the writer's style or word choice, or define unfamiliar terms and concepts.



TECH TIP: Taking Notes

If you use your computer when you take notes instead of writing annotations on the page, be sure to label each note so you remember where it came from. (You will need this information for your paper's parenthetical references and works-cited page.) Include the author's name and the title of the reading selection as well as the page on which the information you are citing appears. Also note the page and paragraph number where you found the information so you will be able to find it again.

The questions below can guide you as you read and help you make useful annotations.



CHECKLIST

Questions for Critical Reading

- What is the writer's general subject?
- What is the writer's main point?
- What are the writer's key supporting points?
- Does the writer seem to have a particular purpose in mind?
- What kind of audience is the writer addressing?
- What are the writer's assumptions about audience? About subject?
- Are the writer's ideas consistent with your own?
- Does the writer reveal any biases?
- Do you have any knowledge that challenges the writer's ideas?
- Is any information missing?
- Are any sequential or logical links missing?
- Can you identify themes or ideas that also appear in other works you have read?
- Can you identify parallels with your own experience?

The following pages reproduce the student's highlighting of "Cutting and Pasting: A Senior Thesis by (Insert Name)" from page 18 and also include her annotations. (She annotated the headnote and background material as well, but these annotations are not shown here.)

Teachers as cops

Teachers resigned
to situation

Key problem—Move
from “intellectual
engagement” and
critical thinking to
“mere training”

Colleges as
police states!

A friend who teaches at a well-known eastern university told me recently that plagiarism was turning him into a cop. He begins the semester collecting evidence, in the form of an in-class essay that gives him a sense of how well students think and write. He looks back at the samples later when students turn in papers that feature their own, less-than-perfect prose alongside expertly written passages lifted verbatim from the Web.

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As my friend sees it: “This represents a shift away from the view of education as the process of intellectual engagement through which we learn to think critically and toward the view of education as mere training. In training, you are trying to find the right answer at any cost, not trying to improve your mind.”

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Problem isn't
just ethics

Nationally, discussions about plagiarism tend to focus on questions of ethics. But as David Pritchard, a physics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told me recently: "The big sleeping dog here is not the moral issue. The problem is that kids don't learn if they don't do the work."

Prof. Pritchard and his colleagues illustrated the point in a study of cheating behavior by M.I.T. students who used an online system to complete homework. The students who were found to have copied the most answers from others started out with the same math and physics skills as their harder-working classmates. But by skipping the actual work in homework, they fell behind in understanding and became significantly more likely to fail.

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True

If we look closely at plagiarism as practiced by youngsters, we can see that they have a different relationship to the printed word than did the generations before them. When many young people think of writing, they don't think of fashioning original sentences into a sustained thought. They think of making something like a collage of found passages and ideas from the Internet.

"Cutting and pasting" = "sampling" ✓

They become like rap musicians who construct what they describe as new works by "sampling" (which is to say, cutting and pasting) beats and refrains from the works of others.

What's the answer to this question? (What can schools do? Who is responsible for solving problem?)

This habit of mind is already pervasive in the culture and will be difficult to roll back. But parents, teachers, and policy makers need to understand that this is not just a matter of personal style or generational expression. It's a question of whether we can preserve the methods through which education at its best teaches people to think critically and originally.

• • •

As illustrated above, the student who annotated Staples's column on cheating supplemented her highlighting with brief marginal summaries to help her understand key points. She also wrote down questions that she thought would help her focus her responses.

SUMMARIZING KEY IDEAS

One strategy that can help you understand what you are reading is **summarizing** a writer's key ideas, as the student writer does in her marginal annotations of the Staples column on pages 24–25. Putting a writer's ideas into your own words can make an unfamiliar or complex concept more accessible and useful to you. For more on summarizing, see page 712.

Exercise 2

Now, add annotations to the Hinojosa article and related material that you highlighted for Exercise 1. This time, focus on summarizing the writer's key points and on asking questions that will prepare you for discussing (and perhaps writing about) this article.

Reading Visual Texts

The process you use when you react to a **visual text** — a photograph; an advertisement; a diagram, graph, or chart; or a work of fine art, for example — is much the same as the one you use when you respond to a written text. Here too, your goal is to understand the text, and highlighting and annotating a visual text can help you interpret it.

With visual texts, however, instead of identifying elements like particular words and ideas, you identify visual elements. These might include the use of color; the arrangement of shapes; the contrast between large and small or light and dark; and, of course, the particular images the visual includes.

As you approach a visual, you might ask questions like those on the following checklist.

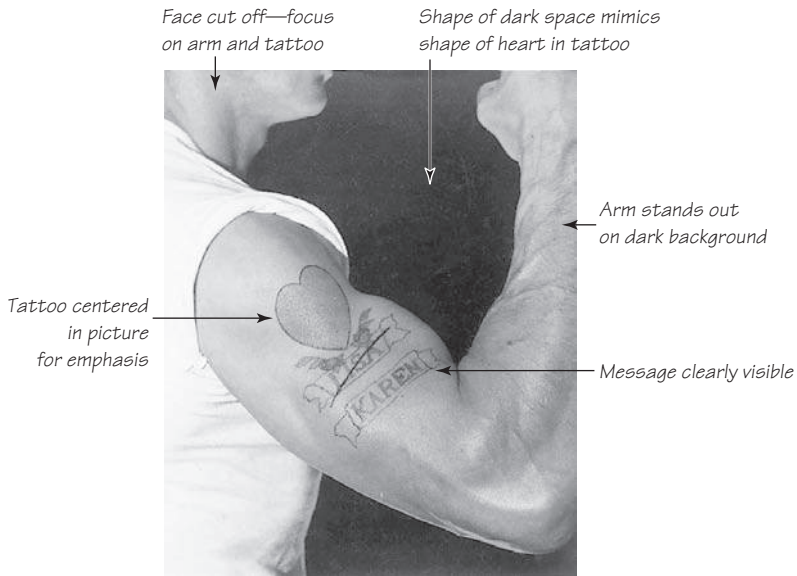


CHECKLIST

Reading Visual Texts

- Why was the visual created?
- What kind of audience is it aimed at?
- How would you characterize the visual? For example, is it fine art? An advertisement? A technical diagram? A chart or graph?
- What is the visual's most important or most striking image? What makes this image dominate the page?
- How is blank space used to emphasize (or de-emphasize) individual images?
- How does contrast between light and dark (or use of color) work to emphasize (or de-emphasize) individual images?
- What objects are depicted in the visual?
- Does the visual include any images of people? If so, how do the people depicted interact with one another? What is their relationship to various objects depicted in the visual?
- Does the visual include any words? If so, what is their function? What is the relationship between the visual's words and its images?

The following photograph, one of four included in “Four Tattoos” (page 226), illustrates a student’s highlighting and annotating of a visual text. (See page 227 for study questions about these images.)



Alex Williams, “Lisa, Karen”

Exercise 3

In this text, visuals are included in Chapters 6–14, where they are the first reading selection in each chapter. Choose one of these visuals, and highlight and annotate it. When you have finished, write a sentence that sums up what you think the visual is trying to communicate and how successful it is at accomplishing its goals.

Invention

Invention, or **prewriting**, is an important (and, frequently, the most neglected) part of the writing process. At this stage, you discover what interests you about your subject and consider what ideas to develop in your essay.

When you are given a writing assignment, you may be tempted to start writing a first draft immediately. Before writing, however, you should be sure you understand your assignment and its limits, and you should think about what you want to say. Time spent on these issues now will pay off later when you draft your essay.

Understanding Your Assignment

Almost everything you write in college begins as an *assignment*. Some assignments will be direct and easy to understand:

Write about an experience that changed your life.

Discuss the procedure you used to synthesize ammonia.

Others will be difficult and complex:

Using Jonathan Kozol's essay "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society" as source material, write an essay using as your thesis the following statement by James Madison: "A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives."

Before beginning to write, you need to understand what your assignment is asking you to do. If the assignment is written as a question, read it carefully several times, and underline its key words. If the assignment is read aloud by your instructor, be sure to copy it accurately. (A mistaken word — *analyze* for *compare*, for example — can make quite a difference.) If you are confused about anything, ask your instructor for clarification. Remember that no matter how well written an essay is, it will fall short if it does not address the assignment.

Setting Limits

Once you understand the assignment, you should consider its *length*, *purpose*, *audience*, and *occasion* and your own *knowledge* of the subject. Each of these factors helps you determine what you will say about your subject.

Length

Often, your instructor will specify the **length** of a paper, and this word or page limit has a direct bearing on your paper's focus. For example, you would need a narrower topic for a two-page essay than for a ten-page one. Similarly, you could not discuss a question as thoroughly during an hour-long exam as you might in a paper written over several days.

If your instructor sets no page limit, consider how the nature of the assignment suggests a paper's length. A *summary* of a chapter or an article, for instance, should be much shorter than the original, whereas an *analysis* of a poem will most likely be longer than the poem itself. If you are uncertain about the appropriate length for your paper, consult your instructor.

Purpose

Your **purpose** also limits what you say and how you say it. For example, if you were writing a job application letter, you would not emphasize the same elements of college life as you would in an email to a friend. In the first case, you would want to persuade the reader to hire you, so you might include your grade-point average, a list of the relevant courses you took, and perhaps the work you did for a service-learning course. In the second case, you would want to inform and perhaps entertain, so you might share anecdotes about dorm life or describe one of your favorite instructors. In each case, your purpose would help you determine what information to include to evoke a particular response in a specific audience.

In general, you can classify your purposes for writing according to your relationship to the audience.

- In **expressive writing**, you convey personal feelings or impressions to readers. Expressive writing is used in diaries, personal emails and journals, and often in narrative and descriptive essays as well.
- In **informative writing**, you inform readers about something. Informative writing is used in essay exams, lab reports, and expository essays as well as in some research papers and personal Web pages.
- In **persuasive writing**, you try to convince readers to act or think in a certain way. Persuasive writing is used in editorials, argumentative essays, proposals, research papers, and many types of electronic documents such as blogs and Web pages.

In addition to these general purposes, you might have a more specific purpose — to analyze, entertain, hypothesize, assess, summarize, question,

report, recommend, suggest, evaluate, describe, recount, request, instruct, and so on. For example, suppose you wrote a report on homelessness in your community. Your general purpose might be to *inform* readers of the situation, but you might also want to *assess* the problem and *instruct* readers how to help those in need.

Audience

To be effective, your essay should be written with a particular **audience** in mind. An audience can be an *individual* (your instructor, for example), or it can be a *group* (like your classmates or coworkers). Your essay can address a *specialized* audience (such as a group of medical doctors or economists) or a *general* or *universal* audience whose members have little in common (such as the readers of a newspaper or magazine).

In college, your audience is usually your instructor, and your purpose in most cases is to demonstrate your mastery of the subject matter, your reasoning ability, and your competence as a writer. Other audiences may include classmates, professional colleagues, or members of your community. Considering the age and gender of your audience, its political and religious values, its social and educational level, and its interest in your subject may help you define it.

Often, you will find that your audience is just too diverse to be categorized. In such cases, many writers imagine a general (or universal) audience and make points that they think will appeal to a variety of readers. At other times, writers identify a common denominator, a role that characterizes the entire audience. For instance, when a report on the dangers of smoking asserts, “Now is the time for health-conscious individuals to demand that cigarettes be removed from the market,” it automatically casts its audience in the role of health-conscious individuals.

After you define your audience, you have to determine how much (or how little) its members know about your subject. This consideration helps you decide how much information your readers will need in order to understand the discussion. Are they highly informed? If so, you can present your points without much explanation. Are they relatively uninformed? If this is the case, you will have to include definitions of key terms, background information, and summaries of basic research.

Keep in mind that experts in one field will need background information in other fields. If, for example, you were writing an analysis of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, you could assume that the literature instructor who assigned the novel would not need a plot summary. However, if you wrote an essay for your history instructor that used *Heart of Darkness* to illustrate the evils of European colonialism in nineteenth-century Africa, you would probably include a short plot summary. (Even though your history instructor would know a lot about colonialism in Africa, she might not be familiar with Conrad’s work.)

Occasion

In general, **occasion** refers to the situation (or situations) that leads someone to write about a topic. Obviously, in an academic writing situation, the occasion is almost always a specific assignment. The occasion suggests a specific audience — for example, a history instructor — as well as a specific purpose — for example, to discuss the causes of World War I. In fact, even the format of a paper — whether you use (or do not use) headings or whether you present your response to an assignment as an essay, as a technical report, or as a PowerPoint presentation — is determined by the occasion for your writing. For this reason, a paper suitable for a psychology or sociology class might not be suitable for a composition class.

Like college writing assignments, each writing task you do outside of school requires an approach that suits the occasion. An email to coworkers, for instance, may be less formal than a report to a manager. In addition, the occasion suggests how much (or how little) information the piece of writing includes. Finally, your occasion suggests your purpose. For example, an email to members of an online discussion group might be strictly informational, whereas an email to a state senator about preserving a local landmark would be persuasive as well as informative.

Knowledge

What you know (and do not know) about a subject determines what you can say about it. Before writing about any subject, ask yourself what you know about the subject and what you need to find out.

Different writing situations require different kinds of knowledge. A personal essay will draw on your own experiences and observations; a term paper will require you to gain new knowledge through research. In many cases, your page limit and the amount of time you are given to do the assignment will help you decide how much information you need to gather before you can begin.



CHECKLIST

Setting Limits

Length

- Has your instructor specified a length?
- Does the nature of your assignment suggest a length?

Purpose

- Is your general purpose to express personal feelings? To inform? To persuade?
- In addition to your general purpose, do you have any more specific purposes?
- Does your assignment provide any guidelines about purpose?

Audience

- Is your audience a group or an individual?
- Are you going to address a specialized or a general audience?

- Should you take into consideration the audience's age, gender, education, biases, or political or social values?
- Should you cast your audience in a particular role?
- How much can you assume your audience knows about your subject?

Occasion

- Are you writing in class or at home?
- Are you addressing a situation outside the academic setting?
- What special approaches does your occasion for writing require?

Knowledge

- What do you know about your subject?
- What do you need to find out?

Exercise 1

Decide whether or not each of the following topics is appropriate for the stated limits, and then write a few sentences to explain why each topic is or is not acceptable.

1. *A two-to-three-page paper* A history of animal testing in medical research labs
2. *A two-hour final exam* The effectiveness of bilingual education programs
3. *A one-hour in-class essay* An interpretation of one of Andy Warhol's paintings of Campbell's soup cans
4. *An email to your college newspaper* A discussion of your school's policy on plagiarism

Exercise 2

Make a list of the different audiences to whom you speak or write in your daily life. (Consider all the different people you see regularly, such as family members, your roommate, instructors, your boss, your friends, and so on.) Then, record your answers to the following questions:

1. Do you speak or write to each person in the same way and about the same things? If not, how do your approaches to these people differ?
2. List some subjects that would interest some of these people but not others. How do you account for these differences?
3. Choose one of the following subjects, and describe how you would speak or write to different audiences about it.
 - A change that improved your life
 - Censoring Internet content
 - Taking a year off before college
 - Reality TV shows

Moving from Subject to Topic

Although many essays begin as specific assignments, some begin as broad areas of interest or concern. These **general subjects** always need to be narrowed to **specific topics** that can be discussed within the limits of the assignment. For example, a subject like stem-cell research could be interesting, but it is too complicated to write about for any college assignment except in a general way. You need to limit such a subject to a topic that can be covered within the time and space available.

GENERAL SUBJECT

Stem-cell research

Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*

Constitutional law

The Internet

SPECIFIC TOPIC

Using stem-cell research to cure multiple sclerosis

Billy Budd as a Christ figure

One unforeseen result of the *Miranda* ruling

The uses of chat rooms in composition classes

Two strategies can help you narrow a general subject to a specific topic: *questions for probing* and *freewriting*.

Questions for Probing

One way to move from a general subject to a specific topic is to examine your subject by asking a series of questions about it. These **questions for probing** are useful because they reflect how your mind operates — for instance, finding similarities and differences, or dividing a whole into its parts. By asking the questions on the following checklist, you can explore your subject systematically. Not all questions will work for every subject, but any single question may elicit many different answers, and each answer is a possible topic for your essay.



CHECKLIST

Questions for Probing

- What happened?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?
- Who did it?
- What does it look like?
- What are its characteristics?
- What impressions does it make?
- What are some typical cases or examples of it?
- How did it happen?
- What makes it work?
- How is it made?

Why did it happen?
 What caused it?
 What does it cause?
 What are its effects?
 How is it like other things?
 How is it different from other things?
 What are its parts or types?
 How can its parts or types be separated or grouped?
 Do its parts or types fit into a logical order?
 Into what categories can its parts or types be arranged?
 On what basis can it be categorized?
 How can it be defined?
 How does it resemble other members of its class?
 How does it differ from other members of its class?

When applied to a subject, some of these questions can yield many workable topics, including some you might never have considered had you not asked the questions. For example, by applying this approach to the general subject “the Brooklyn Bridge,” you can generate more ideas and topics than you need:

What happened? A short history of the Brooklyn Bridge

What does it look like? A description of the Brooklyn Bridge

How is it made? The construction of the Brooklyn Bridge

What are its effects? The impact of the Brooklyn Bridge on American writers

How does it differ from other members of its class? Innovations in the design of the Brooklyn Bridge

At this point in the writing process, you want to come up with possible topics, and the more ideas you have, the wider your choice. Begin by jotting down all the topics you think of. (You can repeat the process of probing several times to limit topics further.) Once you have a list of topics, eliminate those that do not interest you or are too complex or too simple to fit your assignment. When you have discarded these less promising topics, you should still have several left. You can then select the topic that best suits your paper’s length, purpose, audience, and occasion, as well as your interests and your knowledge of the subject.



TECH TIP: Questions for Probing

You can store the questions for probing listed on pages 34–35 in a file that you can open whenever you have a new subject. Make sure you keep a record of your answers. If the topic you have chosen is too difficult or too narrow, you can return to the questions-for-probing file and probe your subject again.

Exercise 3

Indicate whether each of the following is a general subject or a specific topic that is narrow enough for a short essay.

1. An argument against fast-food ads that are aimed at young children
2. Home schooling
3. Cell phones and driving
4. Changes in U.S. immigration laws
5. Requiring college students to study a foreign language
6. The advantages of funding health care for children of undocumented workers
7. A comparison of small-town and big-city living
8. Student loans
9. The advantages of service-learning courses
10. The need for totally electric cars

Exercise 4

In preparation for writing a 750-word essay, choose two of the following general subjects, and generate three or four specific topics from each by using as many of the questions for probing as you can.

1. Credit-card fraud
2. Job interviews
3. Identity theft
4. Gasoline prices
5. Substance abuse
6. Climate change
7. The minimum wage
8. Age discrimination
9. Cyberbullying
10. The need for recycling
11. The person you admire most
12. Rising college tuition
13. Online courses
14. Sensational trials
15. The widespread use of surveillance cameras

Freewriting

Another strategy for moving from subject to topic is **freewriting**. You can use freewriting at any stage of the writing process — for example, to

generate supporting information or to find a thesis. However, freewriting is a particularly useful way to narrow a general subject or assignment.

When you freewrite, you write for a fixed period, perhaps five or ten minutes, without stopping and without paying attention to spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Your goal is to get your ideas down on paper so that you can react to them and shape them. If you have nothing to say, write down anything until ideas begin to emerge — and in time they will. The secret is to *keep writing*. Try to focus on your subject, but don't worry if you wander off in other directions. The object of freewriting is to let your ideas flow. Often, your best ideas will come from the unexpected connections you make as you write.

After completing your freewriting, read what you have written and look for ideas you can write about. Some writers underline ideas they think they might explore in their essays. Any of these ideas could become essay topics, or they could become subjects for other freewriting exercises. You might want to freewrite again, using a new idea as your focus. This process of writing more and more specific freewriting exercises — called **focused freewriting** or **looping** — can often yield a great deal of useful information and help you decide on a workable topic.



TECH TIP: Freewriting

If you freewrite on a computer, you may find that staring at your own words causes you to go blank. One possible solution is to turn down the brightness until the screen becomes dark and then to freewrite. This technique allows you to block out distracting elements and concentrate on just your ideas. Once you finish freewriting, turn up the brightness, and see what you have.

A STUDENT WRITER: Freewriting

After reading, highlighting, and annotating Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s "What's in a Name?" (page 17), Laura Bobnak, a student in a composition class, decided to write an essay in response to this Writing Workshop question.

Write about a time when you, like Gates's father, could have spoken out in protest but chose not to. Would you make the same decision today?

In an attempt to narrow this assignment to a workable topic, Laura did the following freewriting exercise.

Write for ten minutes . . . ten minutes . . . at 9 o'clock in the morning — Just what I want to do in the morning — If you can't think of something to say, just write about anything. Right! Time to get this over with — An experience — should have talked — I can think of plenty of times I should have kept quiet! I should have brought a bottle of water to class. I

wonder what the people next to me are writing about. That reminds me. Next to me. Jeff Servin in chemistry. The time I saw him cheating. I was mad but I didn't do anything. I studied so hard and all he did was cheat. I was so mad. Nobody else seemed to care. What's the difference between now and then? It's only a year and a half. . . . Honor code? Maturity? A lot of people cheated in high school. I bet I could write about this — Before and after, etc. My attitude then and now.

After some initial floundering, Laura discovered an idea that could be the basis for her essay. Although her discussion of the incident still had to be developed, Laura's freewriting helped her discover a possible topic for her essay: a time she saw someone cheating and did not speak out.

Exercise 5

Do a five-minute freewriting exercise on one of the topics you generated in Exercise 4 (page 36).

Exercise 6

Read what you have just written, underline the most interesting ideas, and choose one idea as a topic you could write about in a short essay. Freewrite about this topic for another five minutes to narrow it further and to generate ideas for your essay. Underline the ideas that seem most useful.

Finding Something to Say

Once you have narrowed your subject to a workable topic, you need to find something to say about it. *Brainstorming* and *journal writing* are useful tools for generating ideas, and both can be helpful at this stage of the writing process (and whenever you need to find additional material).

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way of discovering ideas about your topic. You can brainstorm in a group, exchanging ideas with several students in your composition class and noting the most useful ideas. You can also brainstorm on your own, quickly recording every fact, idea, or detail you can think of that relates to your topic. Your notes might include words, phrases, statements, questions, or even drawings or diagrams. Jot them down in the order in which you think of them. Some of the items may be inspired by your class notes; others may be ideas you got from reading or from talking with friends; and still other items may be ideas you have begun to wonder about, points you thought of while moving from subject to topic, or thoughts that occurred to you as you brainstormed.

A STUDENT WRITER: Brainstorming

To narrow her topic further and find something to say about it, Laura Bobnak made the brainstorming notes shown on page 40. After reading these notes several times, Laura decided to concentrate on the differences between her current and earlier attitudes toward cheating. She knew that she could write a lot about this idea and relate it to the assignment, and she felt confident that her topic would be interesting both to her instructor and to the other students in the class.



TECH TIP: Brainstorming

Your word-processing program makes it easy to create bulleted or numbered lists and gives you the flexibility to experiment with different ways of arranging and grouping items from your brainstorming notes. You can even use the drawing tools to make diagrams.

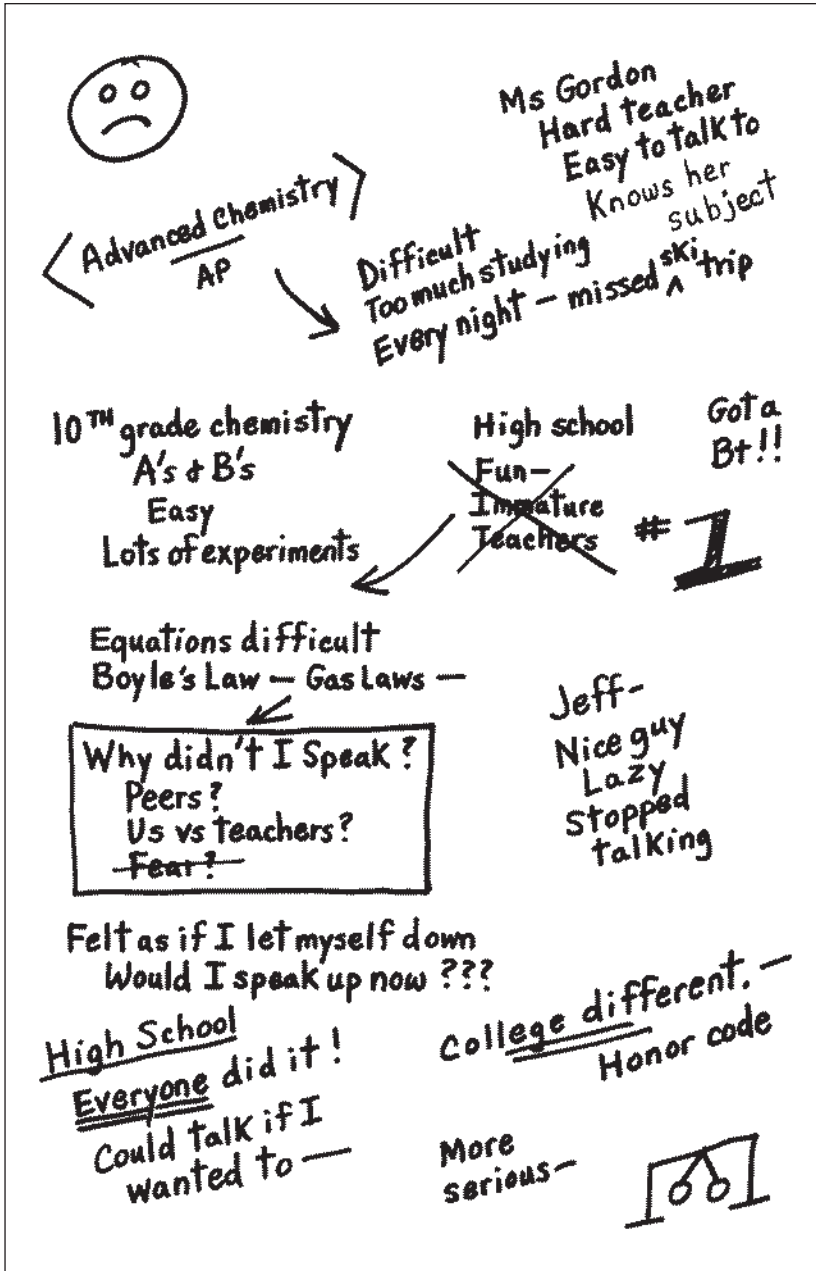
Journal Writing

Journal writing can be a useful source of ideas at any stage of the writing process. Many writers routinely keep a journal, jotting down experiences or exploring ideas they may want to use when they write. They write journal entries even when they have no particular writing project in mind. Often, these journal entries are the kernels from which longer pieces of writing develop. Your instructor may ask you to keep a writing journal, or you may decide to do so on your own. In either case, you will find your journal entries are likely to be more narrowly focused than freewriting or brainstorming, perhaps examining a small part of a reading selection or even one particular statement. Sometimes you will write in your journal in response to specific questions, such as the Journal Entry assignments that appear throughout this book. Assignments like these can help you start thinking about a reading selection that you may later discuss in class or write about.

A STUDENT WRITER: Journal Writing

In the following journal entry, Laura Bobnak explores one idea from her brainstorming notes — her thoughts about her college's honor code.

At orientation, the dean of students talked about the college's honor code. She talked about how we were a community of scholars who were here for a common purpose — to take part in an intellectual conversation. According to her, the purpose of the honor code is to make sure this conversation continues uninterrupted. This idea sounded dumb at orientation, but now it makes sense. If I saw someone cheating, I'd tell the instructor. First, though, I'd ask the *student* to go to the instructor. I don't see this as "telling" or "squealing." We're



Brainstorming notes

all here to get an education, and we should be able to assume everyone is being honest and fair. Besides, why should I go to all the trouble of studying while someone else does nothing and gets the same grade?

Even though Laura eventually included only a small part of this entry in her paper, writing in her journal helped her focus her ideas about her topic.



TECH TIP: Keeping a Journal

Keeping your journal in a computer file has some obvious advantages. Not only can you maintain a neat record of your ideas, but you can also easily move entries from your journal into an essay without retyping them. Make sure, however, that you clearly distinguish between your ideas and those of your sources. If you paste material from your sources directly into your journal and then paste that material into your paper without documenting it, you are committing plagiarism. (For information on avoiding plagiarism, see Chapter 17.)

Grouping Ideas

Once you have generated material for your essay, you will want to group ideas that belong together. *Clustering* and *outlining* can help you do this.

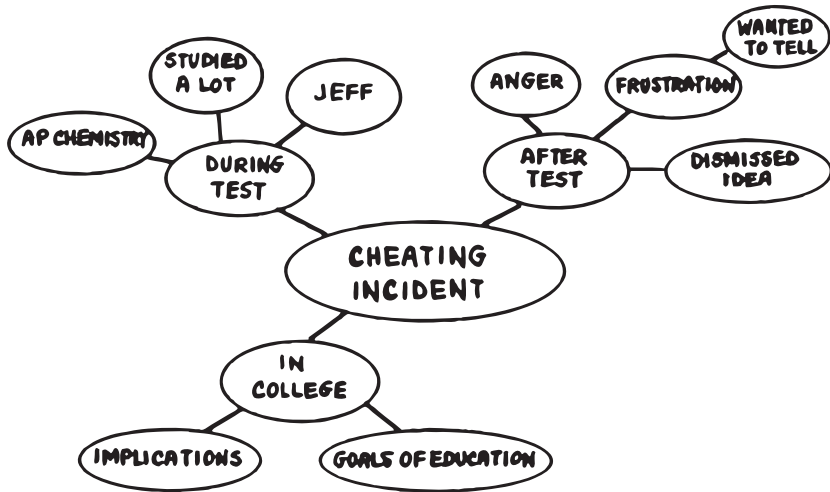
Clustering

Clustering is a way of visually arranging ideas so that you can tell at a glance where ideas belong and whether or not you need more information. Although you can use clustering at an earlier stage of the writing process, it is especially useful now for seeing how your ideas fit together. (Clustering can also help you narrow your paper's topic even further. If you find that your cluster diagram is too detailed, you can write about just one branch of the cluster.)

Begin clustering by writing your topic in the center of a sheet of paper. After circling the topic, surround it with the words and phrases that identify the major points you intend to discuss. (You can get ideas from your brainstorming notes, from your journal, and from your freewriting.) Circle these words and phrases, and connect them to the topic in the center. Next, construct other clusters of ideas relating to each major point, and draw lines connecting them to the appropriate point. By dividing and subdividing your points, you get more specific as you move outward from the center. In the process, you identify the facts, details, examples, and opinions that illustrate and expand your main points.

A STUDENT WRITER: Clustering

Because Laura Bobnak was not very visually oriented, she chose not to use this method of grouping her ideas. If she had, however, her cluster diagram might have looked like this.



Making an Informal Outline

As an alternative or follow-up to clustering, you can organize your notes from brainstorming or other invention techniques into an **informal outline**. Informal outlines do not include all the major divisions and subdivisions of your paper the way formal outlines do; they simply suggest the shape of your emerging essay. Quite often an informal outline is just a list of your major points presented in a tentative order. Sometimes, however, an informal outline will include supporting details or suggest a pattern of development.



TECH TIP: Making an Informal Outline

You can easily arrange the notes you generated in your invention activities into an informal outline. You can construct an informal outline by typing words or phrases from your notes and rearranging them until the order makes sense. Later, you can use the categories from this informal outline to construct a formal outline (see page 62).

A STUDENT WRITER: Making an Informal Outline

The following informal outline shows how Laura Bobnak grouped her ideas.

During test

Found test hard

Saw Jeff cheating

After test

Got angry

Wanted to tell

Dismissed idea

In college

Understand implications of cheating

Understand goals of education

Exercise 7

Continue your work on the topic you selected in Exercise 6 (page 38). Brainstorm about your topic; then, select the ideas you plan to explore in your essay, and use either clustering or an informal outline to help you group related ideas together.

Understanding Thesis and Support

Once you have grouped your ideas, you need to consider your essay's thesis. A **thesis** is the main idea of your essay, its central point. The concept

Introductory paragraph

Thesis statement

Body paragraph (support for thesis)

Body paragraph (support for thesis)

Body paragraph (support for thesis)

Body paragraph (support for thesis)

Concluding paragraph

Restatement of thesis or review of key points

of *thesis and support* — stating your thesis and developing ideas that explain and expand it — is central to college writing.

The essays you write will consist of several paragraphs: an **introduction** that presents your thesis statement, several **body paragraphs** that develop and support your thesis, and a **conclusion** that reinforces your thesis and provides closure. Your thesis holds this structure together; it is the center that the rest of your essay develops around.

Developing a Thesis

Defining the Thesis Statement

A **thesis statement** is more than a *title*, an *announcement of your intent*, or a *statement of fact*. Although a descriptive title orients your readers, it is not detailed enough to reveal your essay’s purpose or direction. An announcement of your intent can reveal more, but it is stylistically distracting. Finally, a statement of fact — such as a historical fact or a statistic — is a dead end and therefore cannot be developed into an essay. For example, a statement like “Alaska became a state in 1959” or “Tuberculosis is highly contagious” or “The population of Greece is about ten million” provides your essay with no direction. However, a judgment or opinion *can* be an effective thesis — for instance, “The continuing threat of tuberculosis, particularly in the inner cities, suggests it is necessary to frequently test high-risk populations.”

Title	Hybrid Cars: Pro and Con
Announcement of intent	I will examine the pros and cons of hybrid cars that use both gasoline and electricity.
Statement of fact	Hybrid cars are more energy efficient than cars with standard gasoline engines.
Thesis statement	Hybrid cars that use both gasoline and electricity would decrease our country’s dependence on foreign oil.
Title	Orwell’s “A Hanging”
Announcement of intent	This paper will discuss George Orwell’s attitude toward the death penalty in his essay “A Hanging.”
Statement of fact	In his essay, Orwell describes a hanging that he witnessed in Burma.
Thesis statement	In “A Hanging,” George Orwell shows that capital punishment is not only brutal but also immoral.

Title	Speaking Out
Announcement of intent	This essay will discuss a time when I could have spoken out but did not.
Statement of fact	Once I saw someone cheating and did not speak out.
Thesis statement	As I look back at the cheating I witnessed, I wonder why I kept silent and what would have happened if I had acted.

WHAT A GOOD THESIS DOES

For writers

It helps writers plan an essay.
 It helps writers organize ideas in an essay.
 It helps writers unify all the ideas in an essay.

For readers

It identifies the main idea of an essay.
 It guides readers through an essay.
 It clarifies the subject and the focus of an essay.

Deciding on a Thesis

No rules determine when you formulate your thesis; the decision depends on the scope of your assignment, your knowledge of the subject, and your method of writing. When you know a lot about a subject, you may come up with a thesis before doing any invention activities (freewriting or brainstorming, for example). At other times, you may have to review your notes and then think of a single statement that communicates your position on the topic. Occasionally, your assignment may specify a thesis by telling you to take a particular position on a topic. In any case, you should decide on a thesis statement before you begin to write your first draft.

As you write, you will continue to discover new ideas, and you will probably move in directions that you did not anticipate. For this reason, the thesis statement you develop at this stage of the writing process is only **tentative**. Still, because a tentative thesis helps you to focus your ideas, it is essential at the initial stages of writing. As you draft your essay, review your thesis statement in light of the points you make, and revise it accordingly.

Stating Your Thesis

It is a good idea to include a one-sentence statement of your thesis early in your essay. An effective thesis statement has three characteristics:

1. **An effective thesis statement clearly expresses your essay's main idea.** It does more than state your topic; it indicates what you will say about your topic, and it signals how you will approach your material. The following thesis statement, from the essay “Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts” by Bruce Catton (page 393), clearly communicates the writer’s main idea.

They [Grant and Lee] were two strong men, these oddly different generals, and they represented the strengths of two conflicting currents that, through them, had come into final collision.

This statement says that the essay will compare and contrast Grant and Lee. Specifically, it indicates that Catton will present the two Civil War generals as symbols of two opposing historical currents. If the statement had been less fully developed — for example, had Catton written, “Grant and Lee were quite different from each other” — it would have just echoed the essay’s title.

2. **An effective thesis statement communicates your essay's purpose.** Whether your purpose is to evaluate or analyze or simply to describe or inform, your thesis statement should communicate that purpose to your readers. In general terms, your thesis can be **expressive**, conveying a mood or impression; it can be **informative**, perhaps listing the major points you will discuss or presenting an objective overview of the essay; or it can be **persuasive**, taking a strong stand or outlining the position you will argue.

Each of the following thesis statements communicates a different purpose.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| To express feelings | The city’s homeless families live in heartbreaking surroundings. |
| To inform | The plight of the homeless has become so serious that it is a major priority for many city governments. |
| To persuade | The best way to address the problems of the homeless is to renovate abandoned city buildings to create suitable housing for homeless families. |

3. **An effective thesis statement is clearly worded.** To communicate your essay’s main idea, an effective thesis statement should be clearly worded. (It should also speak for itself. It is not necessary to write, “My thesis is that . . .” or “The thesis of this paper is. . . .”) The thesis statement should give a straightforward and accurate indication of what follows, and it should not mislead readers about the essay’s direction, emphasis, scope, content, or viewpoint. Vague language, confusing abstractions, irrelevant details, and unnecessarily complex terminology have no place in a thesis statement. Keep in mind, too, that your thesis statement should not make promises that your essay is not going to keep. For example, if you are going to discuss just the *effects* of new immigration laws, your thesis statement should not emphasize the events that resulted in their passage.

Your thesis statement cannot, of course, include every point you will discuss in your essay. Still, it should be specific enough to indicate your direction and scope. The sentence “New immigration laws have failed to stem the tide of illegal immigrants” is not an effective thesis statement because it does not give your essay much focus. Which immigration laws will you be examining? Which illegal immigrants? The following sentence, however, *is* an effective thesis statement. It clearly indicates what the writer is going to discuss, and it establishes a specific direction for the essay.

Because they do not take into account the economic causes of immigration, current immigration laws do little to decrease the number of illegal immigrants coming from Mexico into the United States.

Implying a Thesis

Like an explicitly stated thesis, an **implied thesis** conveys an essay’s purpose, but it does not do so explicitly. Instead, the selection and arrangement of the essay’s ideas suggest the purpose. Professional writers sometimes prefer this option because an implied thesis is subtler than a stated thesis. (An implied thesis is especially useful in narratives, descriptions, and some arguments, where an explicit thesis would seem heavy-handed or arbitrary.) In most college writing, however, you should state your thesis to avoid any risk of being misunderstood or of wandering away from your topic.

A STUDENT WRITER: Developing a Thesis

After experimenting with different ways of arranging her ideas for her essay, Laura Bobnak summed them up in a tentative thesis statement.

As I look back at the cheating I witnessed, I wonder why I kept silent and what would have happened if I had acted.



CHECKLIST

Stating Your Thesis

- Do you state your thesis in one complete, concise sentence?
- Does your thesis indicate your purpose?
- Is your thesis suited to the assignment?
- Does your thesis clearly convey the main idea you intend to support in your essay?
- Does your thesis suggest how you will organize your essay?

Exercise 8

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the following as thesis statements.

1. My instructor has an attendance policy.
2. My instructor should change her attendance policy because it is bad.
3. My instructor should change her attendance policy because it is unreasonable, inflexible, and unfair.

4. For many people, a community college makes more sense than a four-year college or university.
5. Some children show violent behavior.
6. Violence is a problem in our society.
7. Conflict-resolution courses should be taught to help prevent violence in America's schools.
8. Social networking sites such as Facebook can cause problems.
9. Facebook attracts many college students.
10. College students should be careful of what material they put on their Facebook pages because prospective employers routinely check them.

Exercise 9

Rewrite the following factual statements to make them effective thesis statements. Make sure each thesis statement is a clearly and specifically worded sentence.

1. Many hospitals will not admit patients without health insurance because they are afraid that such patients will not be able to pay their bills.
2. Several Supreme Court decisions have said that art containing explicit sexual images is not necessarily pornographic.
3. Many women earn less money than men do, in part because they drop out of the workforce during their child-rearing years.
4. People who watch more than five hours of television a day tend to think the world is more violent than do people who watch less than two hours of television daily.
5. In recent years, the suicide rate among teenagers — especially middle- and upper-middle-class teenagers — has risen dramatically.

Exercise 10

Read the following sentences from “The Argument Culture” by Deborah Tannen. Then, formulate a one-sentence thesis statement that summarizes the key points Tannen makes about the nature of argument in our culture.

- “More and more, our public interactions have become like arguing with a spouse.”
- “Nearly everything is framed as a battle or game in which winning or losing is the main concern.”
- “The argument culture pervades every aspect of our lives today.”
- “Issues from global warming to abortion are depicted as two-sided arguments, when in fact most Americans’ views lie somewhere in the middle.”
- “What’s wrong with the argument culture is the ubiquity, the knee-jerk nature of approaching any issue, problem, or public person in an adversarial way.”

- “If you fight to win, the temptation is great to deny facts that support your opponent’s views and say only what supports your side.”
- “We must expand the notion of ‘debate’ to include more dialogue.”
- “Perhaps it is time to re-examine the assumption that audiences always prefer a fight.”
- “Instead of insisting on hearing ‘both sides,’ let’s insist on hearing ‘all sides.’”

Exercise 11

Go through as many steps as you need to formulate an effective thesis statement for the essay you have been working on.

Arrangement

Each of the tasks discussed in Chapter 2 represents choices you have to make about your topic and your material. Now, before you actually begin to write, you have another choice to make — how to arrange your material into an essay.

Recognizing a Pattern

Sometimes arranging your ideas will be easy because your assignment specifies a particular pattern of development. This may be the case in a composition class, where the instructor may assign a descriptive or a narrative essay. Also, certain assignments or exam questions suggest how your material should be structured. For example, an instructor might ask you to tell about how something works, or an exam question might ask you to trace the circumstances leading up to an event. If you are perceptive, you will realize that your instructor is asking for a process essay and that the exam question is asking for either a narrative or a cause-and-effect response. The important thing is to recognize the clues such assignments give (or those you find in your topic or thesis statement) and to structure your essay accordingly.

One clue to structuring your essay can be found in the questions that proved most helpful when you probed your subject (see pages 34–35). For example, if questions like “What happened?” and “When did it happen?” yielded the most useful information about your topic, you should consider structuring your paper as a narrative. The chart on page 52 links various questions to the patterns of development they suggest. Notice that the terms in the right-hand column — narration, description, and so on — identify patterns of development that can help order your ideas. Chapters 6 through 13 explain and illustrate each of these patterns.

**CHECKLIST****Recognizing a Pattern**

What happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Who did it?	}	Narration
What does it look like? What are its characteristics? What impressions does it make?	}	Description
What are some typical cases or examples of it?	}	Exemplification
How did it happen? What makes it work? How is it made?	}	Process
Why did it happen? What caused it? What does it cause? What are its effects?	}	Cause and effect
How is it like other things? How is it different from other things?	}	Comparison and contrast
What are its parts or types? How can its parts or types be separated or grouped? Do its parts or types fit into a logical order? Into what categories can its parts or types be arranged? On what basis can it be categorized?	}	Classification and division
How can it be defined? How does it resemble other members of its class? How does it differ from other members of its class?	}	Definition

Understanding the Parts of the Essay

No matter what pattern of development you use, your essay should have a beginning, a middle, and an end — that is, an *introduction*, a *body*, and a *conclusion*.

The Introduction

The **introduction** of your essay, usually one paragraph and rarely more than two, introduces your subject, creates interest, and often states your thesis.

You can use a variety of strategies to introduce an essay and engage your readers' interest. Here are several options for beginning an essay (in each paragraph, the thesis statement is underlined).

1. You can begin with *background information*. This approach works well when you know the audience is already interested in your topic and you can come directly to the point. This strategy is especially useful for exams, where there is no need (or time) for subtlety.

With inflation low, many companies have understandably lowered prices, and the oil industry should be no exception. Consequently, homeowners have begun wondering whether the high price of home heating oil is justified given the economic climate. It makes sense, therefore, for us to start examining the pricing policies of the major American oil companies. (economics essay)

2. You can introduce an essay with your own original *definition* of a relevant term or concept. This technique is especially useful for research papers or exams, where the meaning of a specific term is crucial.

Democracy is a form of government in which power is given to and exercised by the people. This may be true in theory, but some recent elections have raised concerns about the future of democracy. Extensive voting-machine irregularities and "ghost voting" have jeopardized people's faith in the democratic process. (political science exam)

3. You can begin your essay with an *anecdote* or *story* that leads readers to your thesis.

Three years ago, I went with my grandparents to my first auction. They live in a small town outside of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where it is common for people to auction off the contents of a home when someone moves or dies. As I walked through the crowd, I smelled the funnel cakes frying in the food trucks, heard the hypnotic chanting of the auctioneer, and sensed the excitement of the crowd. Two hours later, I walked off with an old trunk that I had bought for thirty dollars and a passion for auctions that I still have today. (composition essay)

4. You can begin with a *question*.

What was it like to live through the Holocaust? Elie Wiesel, in *One Generation After*, answers this question by presenting a series of accounts about ordinary people who found themselves imprisoned in Nazi death camps. As he does so, he challenges some of the assumptions we have about the Holocaust and those who survived. (sociology book report)

5. You can begin with a *quotation*. If it arouses interest, it can encourage your audience to read further.

“The rich are different,” F. Scott Fitzgerald said more than seventy years ago. Apparently, they still are. As an examination of the tax code shows, the wealthy receive many more benefits than the middle class or the poor do. (accounting paper)

6. You can begin with a *surprising statement*. An unexpected statement catches readers’ attention and makes them want to read more.

Believe it or not, most people who live in the suburbs are not white and rich. My family, for example, fits into neither of these categories. Ten years ago, my family and I came to the United States from Pakistan. My parents were poor then, and by some standards, they are still poor even though they both work two jobs. Still, they eventually saved enough to buy a small house in the suburbs of Chicago. Throughout the country, there are many suburban families like mine who are working hard to make ends meet so that their children can get a good education and go to college. (composition essay)

7. You can begin with a *contradiction*. You can open your essay with an idea that most people believe is true and then get readers’ attention by showing that it is inaccurate or ill advised.

Many people think that after the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, the colonists defeated the British army in battle after battle. This commonly held belief is incorrect. The truth is that the colonial army lost most of its battles. The British were defeated not because the colonial army was stronger, but because George Washington refused to be lured into a costly winner-take-all battle and because the British government lost interest in pursuing an expensive war three thousand miles from home. (history take-home exam)

8. You can begin with a *fact* or *statistic*.

According to a recent government study, recipients of Medicare will spend billions of dollars on drugs over the next ten years. This is a very large amount of money, and it illustrates why lawmakers must do more to help older Americans with the cost of medications. Although the current legislation is an important first step, more must be done to help the elderly afford the drugs they need. (public policy essay)

No matter which strategy you select, your introduction should be consistent in tone with the rest of your essay. If it is not, it can misrepresent your intentions and even damage your credibility. (For this reason, it is a good idea not to write your introduction until after you have finished your rough draft.) A technical report, for instance, should have an introduction that reflects the formality and objectivity the occasion requires. The introduction to an autobiographical essay, however, should have a more informal, subjective tone.

**CHECKLIST****What Not to Do in an Introduction**

- **Don't apologize.** Never use phrases such as “in my opinion” or “I may not be an expert, but. . .” By doing so, you suggest that you don't really know your subject.
- **Don't begin with a dictionary definition.** Avoid beginning an essay with phrases like “According to Webster's Dictionary. . .” This type of introduction is overused and trite. If you want to use a definition, develop your own.
- **Don't announce what you intend to do.** Don't begin with phrases such as “In this paper I will . . .” or “The purpose of this essay is to. . .” Use your introduction to create interest in your topic, and let readers discover your intention when they get to your thesis statement.
- **Don't wander.** Your introduction should draw readers into your essay as soon as possible. Avoid irrelevant comments or annoying digressions that will distract readers and make them want to stop reading.

Exercise 1

Look through magazine articles or the essays in this book, and find one example of each kind of introduction. Why do you think each introductory strategy was chosen? What other strategies might have worked?

The Body Paragraphs

The middle section, or **body**, of your essay develops your thesis. The body paragraphs present the support that convinces your audience your thesis is reasonable. To do so, each body paragraph should be *unified*, *coherent*, and *well developed*. It should also follow a particular pattern of development and should clearly support your thesis.

- *Each body paragraph should be unified.* A paragraph is **unified** when each sentence relates directly to the main idea of the paragraph. Frequently, the main idea of a paragraph is stated in a **topic sentence**. Like a thesis statement, a topic sentence acts as a guidepost, making it easy for readers to follow the paragraph's discussion. Although the placement of a topic sentence depends on a writer's purpose and subject, beginning writers often make it the first sentence of a paragraph.

Sometimes the main idea of a paragraph is not stated but **implied** by the sentences in the paragraph. Professional writers often use this technique because they believe that in some situations — especially narratives and descriptions — a topic sentence can seem forced or awkward. As a beginning writer, however, you will find it helpful to use topic sentences to keep your paragraphs focused.

Whether or not you include a topic sentence, remember that each sentence in a paragraph should develop the paragraph's main idea. If the sentences in a paragraph do not support the main idea, the paragraph will lack unity.

In the following excerpt from a student essay, notice how the topic sentence (underlined) unifies the paragraph by summarizing its main idea:

Another problem with fast food is that it contains additives. Fast-food companies know that to keep their customers happy, they have to give them food that tastes good, and this is where the trouble starts. For example, to give fries flavor, McDonald's used to fry their potatoes in beef fat. Shockingly, their fries actually had more saturated fat than their hamburgers did. When the public found out how unhealthy their fries were, the company switched to vegetable oil. What most people don't know, however, is that McDonald's adds a chemical derived from animals to the vegetable oil to give it the taste of beef tallow.

The topic sentence, placed at the beginning of the paragraph, enables readers to grasp the writer's point immediately. The examples that follow all relate to that point, making the paragraph unified.

- *Each body paragraph should be coherent.* A paragraph is **coherent** if its sentences are smoothly and logically connected to one another. Coherence can be strengthened in three ways. First, you can repeat **key words** to carry concepts from one sentence to another and to echo important terms. Second, you can use **pronouns** to refer to key nouns in previous sentences. Finally, you can use **transitions**, words or expressions that show chronological sequence, cause and effect, and so on (see the list of transitions on page 57). These three strategies for connecting sentences — which you can also use to connect paragraphs within an essay — indicate for your readers the exact relationships among your ideas.

The following paragraph, from George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" (page 133), uses repeated key words, pronouns, and transitions to achieve coherence.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open — I could see far down into the caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally, I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

TRANSITIONS

SEQUENCE OR ADDITION

again	first, ... second, ... third	next
also	furthermore	one ... another
and	in addition	still
besides	last	too
finally	moreover	

TIME

afterward	finally	simultaneously
as soon as	immediately	since
at first	in the meantime	soon
at the same time	later	subsequently
before	meanwhile	then
earlier	next	until
eventually	now	

COMPARISON

also	likewise
in comparison	similarly
in the same way	

CONTRAST

although	in contrast	on the one hand ...
but	instead	on the other hand ...
conversely	nevertheless	still
despite	nonetheless	whereas
even though	on the contrary	yet
however		

EXAMPLES

for example	specifically
for instance	that is
in fact	thus
namely	

CONCLUSIONS OR SUMMARIES

as a result	in summary
in conclusion	therefore
in short	thus

CAUSES OR EFFECTS

as a result	so
because	then
consequently	therefore
since	

Orwell keeps his narrative coherent by using transitional expressions (*already, finally, when the shots hit him*) to signal the passing of time. He uses pronouns (*he, his*) in nearly every sentence to refer back to the elephant, the topic of his paragraph. Finally, he repeats key words like *shots* and *die* (and its variants *dead* and *dying*) to link the whole paragraph's sentences together.

- *Each body paragraph should be well developed.* A paragraph is **well developed** if it contains the **support** — examples, reasons, and so on — readers need to understand its main idea. If a paragraph is not adequately developed, readers will feel they have been given only a partial picture of the subject.

If you decide you need more information in a paragraph, you can look back at your brainstorming notes. If this doesn't help, you can freewrite or brainstorm again, talk with friends and instructors, read more about your topic, or (with your instructor's permission) do some research. Your assignment and your topic will determine the kind and amount of information you need.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

- **Examples** Specific illustrations of a general idea or concept
- **Reasons** Underlying causes or explanations
- **Facts** Pieces of information that can be verified or proved
- **Statistics** Numerical data (for example, results of studies by reputable authorities or organizations)
- **Details** Parts or portions of a whole (for example, steps in a process)
- **Expert opinions** Statements by recognized authorities in a particular field
- **Personal experiences** Events that you lived through
- **Visuals** Diagrams, charts, graphs, or photographs



CHECKLIST

Effective Support

- **Support should be relevant.** Body paragraphs should clearly relate to your essay's thesis. Irrelevant material — material that does not pertain to the thesis — should be deleted.
- **Support should be specific.** Body paragraphs should contain support that is specific, not general or vague. Specific examples, clear reasons, and precise explanations engage readers and communicate your ideas to them.
- **Support should be adequate.** Body paragraphs should contain enough facts, reasons, and examples to support your thesis. How much support you need depends on your audience, your purpose, and the scope of your thesis.

- **Support should be representative.** Body paragraphs should present support that is typical, not atypical. For example, suppose you write a paper claiming that flu shots do not work. Your support for this claim is that your grandmother got the flu even though she was vaccinated. This example is not representative because studies show that most people who get vaccinated do not get the flu.
- **Support should be documented.** Support that comes from research (print sources and the Internet, for example) should be documented. (For more information on proper documentation, see the Appendix). **Plagiarism** — failure to document the ideas and words of others — is not only unfair but also dishonest. Always use proper documentation to acknowledge your debt to your sources — and keep in mind that words and ideas you borrow from the essays in this book must also be documented. (For more information on avoiding plagiarism, see Chapter 17.)

The following student paragraph uses two examples to support its topic sentence.

Example 1

Example 2

Just look at how males have been taught that extravagance is a positive characteristic. Scrooge, the main character of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, is portrayed as an evil man until he gives up his miserly ways and freely distributes gifts and money on Christmas day. This behavior, of course, is rewarded when people change their opinions about him and decide that he isn't such a bad person after all. Diamond Jim Brady is another interesting example. This individual was a nineteenth-century financier who was known for his extravagant taste in women and food. On any given night, he would eat enough food to feed at least ten of the numerous poor who roamed the streets of New York at that time. Yet, despite his selfishness and infantile self-gratification, Diamond Jim Brady's name has become associated with the good life.

- *Each body paragraph should follow a particular pattern of development.* In addition to making sure your body paragraphs are unified, coherent, and well developed, you need to organize each paragraph according to a specific pattern of development. (Chapters 6 through 13 each begin with a paragraph-length example of the pattern discussed in the chapter.)

- *Each body paragraph should clearly support the thesis statement.* No matter how many body paragraphs your essay has — three, four, five, or even more — each paragraph should introduce and develop an idea that supports the essay's thesis. Each paragraph's topic sentence should express one of these supporting points. The diagram on page 60 illustrates this thesis- and-support structure.

Introductory paragraph

Thesis statement: Despite the emphasis by journalists on objective reporting, there are three reasons why television news is anything but objective.

Body paragraph

Topic sentence: Television news is not objective because the people who gather and report the news are biased.

Body paragraph

Topic sentence: In addition, television news is not objective because networks face pressure from sponsors.

Body paragraph

Topic sentence: Finally, television news is not objective because networks focus on ratings rather than content.

Concluding paragraph

Restatement of thesis: Even though television journalists claim to strive for objectivity, the truth is that this ideal has been impossible to achieve.

Exercise 2

Choose a body paragraph from one of the essays in this book. Using the criteria discussed on pages 55–60, decide whether the paragraph is unified, coherent, and well developed.

Exercise 3

Choose one essay in this book, and underline its thesis statement. Then, determine how its body paragraphs support that thesis statement. (Note that in a long essay, several body paragraphs may develop a single supporting point, and some paragraphs may serve as transitions from one point to another.)

The Conclusion

Since readers remember best what they read last, your **conclusion** is very important. Always end your essay in a way that reinforces your thesis and your purpose.

Like your introduction, your conclusion is rarely longer than a paragraph. Regardless of its length, however, your conclusion should be consis-

tent with the rest of your essay — that is, it should not introduce points you have not discussed earlier. Frequently, a conclusion will restate your essay’s main idea or review your key points.

Here are several strategies you can use to conclude an essay:

1. You can conclude your essay by *reviewing your key points* or *restating your thesis*.

Rotation of crops provided several benefits. It enriched soil by giving it a rest; it enabled farmers to vary their production; and it ended the cycle of “boom or bust” that had characterized the prewar South’s economy when cotton was the primary crop. Of course, this innovation did not solve all the economic problems of the postwar South, but it did lay the groundwork for the healthy economy this region enjoys today.

(history exam)

2. You can end a discussion of a problem with a *recommendation of a course of action*.

Well-qualified teachers are becoming harder and harder to find. For this reason, school boards should reassess their ideas about what qualifies someone to teach. At the present time, people who have spent their lives working in a particular field are denied certification because they have not taken education courses. This policy deprives school systems of talented teachers. In order to ensure that students have the best possible teachers, school boards should consider applicants’ real-world experience when evaluating their qualifications.

(education essay)

3. You can conclude with a *prediction*. Be sure, however, that your prediction follows logically from the points you have made in the essay. Your conclusion is no place to make new points or to change direction.

Campaign advertisements should help people understand a political candidate’s qualifications and where he or she stands on critical issues. They should not appeal to people’s fears or greed. Above all, they should not personally attack other candidates or oversimplify complex issues. If campaign advertisements continue to do these things, the American people will disregard them and reject the candidates they promote.

(political science essay)

4. You can end with a relevant *quotation*.

In *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau says, “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” This sentiment is reinforced by a drive through the Hill District of our city. Perhaps the work of the men and women who run the clinic on Jefferson Street cannot totally change this situation, but it can give us hope to know that some people, at least, are working for the betterment of us all.

(public health essay)

**CHECKLIST****What Not to Do in a Conclusion**

- **Don't end by repeating the exact words of your thesis and listing your main points.** Avoid boring endings that tell readers what they already know.
- **Don't end with an empty phrase.** Avoid ending with a cliché like “This just goes to prove that you can never be too careful.”
- **Don't introduce new points or go off in new directions.** Your conclusion should not introduce new points for discussion. It should reinforce the points you have already made in your essay.
- **Don't end with an unnecessary announcement.** Don't end by saying that you are ending — for example, “In conclusion, let me say. . . .” The tone of your conclusion should signal that the essay is drawing to a close.

Exercise 4

Look through magazine articles or the essays in this book, and find one example of each kind of conclusion. Why do you think each concluding strategy was chosen? What other strategies might have worked?

Constructing a Formal Outline

Before you begin to write, you may decide to construct a **formal outline** to guide you. Whereas informal outlines are preliminary lists that simply remind you which points to make, formal outlines are detailed, multi-level constructions that indicate the exact order in which you will present your key points and supporting details. The complexity of your assignment determines which type of outline you need. For a short paper, an informal outline like the one on page 43 is usually sufficient. For a longer, more complex essay, however, you may need a formal outline.

One way to construct a formal outline is to copy down the main headings from your informal outline. Then, arrange ideas from your brainstorming notes or cluster diagram as subheadings under the appropriate headings. As you work on your outline, make sure each idea you include supports your thesis. Ideas that don't fit should be reworded or discarded. As you revise your essay, continue to refer to your outline to make sure your thesis and support are logically related. The guidelines that follow will help you prepare a formal outline.

**CHECKLIST****Constructing a Formal Outline**

- Write your thesis statement at the top of the page.
- Group main headings under roman numerals (*I, II, III, IV*, and so on), and place them flush with the left-hand margin.

- Indent each subheading under the first word of the heading above it. Use capital letters before major points and numbers before supporting details.
- Capitalize the first letter of the first word of each heading.
- Make your outline as simple as possible, avoiding overly complex divisions of ideas. (Try not to go beyond third-level headings — 1, 2, 3, and so on.)
- Construct either a **topic outline**, with headings expressed as short phrases or single words (“Advantages and disadvantages”) or a **sentence outline**, with headings expressed as complete sentences (“The advantages of advanced placement chemistry outweigh the disadvantages”). *Never use both phrases and complete sentences in the same outline.*
- Express all headings at the same level in parallel terms. (If roman numeral I is a noun, II, III, and IV should also be nouns.)
- Make sure each heading contains at least two subdivisions. You cannot have a 1 without a 2 or an A without a B.
- Make sure your headings do not overlap.

A STUDENT WRITER: Constructing a Formal Outline

The topic outline Laura Bobnak constructed follows the guidelines discussed above. Notice that her outline focuses on the body of her paper and does not include the introduction or conclusion: these are usually developed after the body has been drafted. (Compare this formal outline with the informal outline on page 43 where Laura simply grouped her brainstorming notes under three general headings.)

Thesis statement: As I look back at the cheating I witnessed, I wonder why I kept silent and what would have happened if I had acted.

- I. The incident
 - A. Test situation
 - B. My observation
 - C. My reactions
 - 1. Anger
 - 2. Silence
- II. Reasons for keeping silent
 - A. Other students' attitudes
 - B. My fears
- III. Current attitude toward cheating
 - A. Effects of cheating on education
 - B. Effects of cheating on students

This outline enabled Laura to arrange her points so that they supported her thesis. As she went on to draft her essay, the outline reminded her to

emphasize the contrast between her present and former attitudes toward cheating.

**TECH TIP: Constructing a Formal Outline**

You can use your word-processing program to arrange and rearrange your headings until your outline is logical and complete. (Your word-processing program will have an outline function that automatically indents and numbers items.) If you saved your prewriting notes in computer files, you can refer to them while working on your outline and perhaps add or modify headings to reflect what you find.

Exercise 5

Read the thesis statement you developed in Chapter 2, Exercise 11 (on page 49), as well as all the notes you made for the essay you are planning. Then, make a topic outline that lists the points you will discuss in your essay. When you are finished, check to make sure your outline conforms to the guidelines on the checklist on pages 62–63.

Drafting and Revising

After you decide on a thesis and an arrangement for your ideas, you can begin to draft and revise your essay. Keep in mind that even as you carry out these activities, you may have to generate more material or revise your thesis statement.

Writing Your First Draft

The purpose of your **first draft** is to get your ideas down on paper so that you can react to them. Experienced writers know that the first draft is nothing more than a work in progress; it exists to be revised. With this in mind, you should expect to cross out and extensively rearrange material. In addition, don't be surprised if you think of new ideas as you write. If a new idea comes to you, go with it. Some of the best writing comes from unexpected turns or accidents. The following guidelines will help you prepare your first draft.



CHECKLIST

Drafting

- **Begin with the body paragraphs.** Because your essay will probably be revised extensively, don't take the time at this stage to write an introduction or conclusion. Let your thesis statement guide you as you draft the body paragraphs of your essay. Later, when you have finished, you can write an appropriate introduction and conclusion.
- **Get your ideas down quickly.** Don't worry about grammar or word choice, and try not to interrupt the flow of your writing with concerns about style.
- **Take regular breaks as you write.** Don't write until you are so exhausted you can't think straight. Many writers divide their writing into stages, perhaps completing one or two body paragraphs and then taking a short break.

(continued)

This strategy is more efficient than trying to write a complete first draft without stopping.

- **Write with revision in mind.** Leave enough space between lines so that you will have room to make changes by hand on hard copy.
- **Leave yourself time to revise.** Remember, your first draft is a *rough draft*. All writing benefits from revision, so allow enough time to write two or more drafts.

A STUDENT WRITER: Writing a First Draft

Here is the first draft of Laura Bobnak's essay on the following topic: "Write about a time when you, like Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s father, could have spoken out but chose not to. Would you make the same decision today?"

When I was in high school, I had an experience like the one Henry Louis 1
Gates Jr. talks about in his essay. It was then that I saw a close friend cheat in chemistry class. As I look back at the cheating I witnessed, I wonder why I kept silent and what would have happened if I had acted.

The incident I am going to describe took place during the final exam for 2
my advanced placement chemistry class. I had studied hard for it, but even so, I found the test difficult. As I struggled to balance a particularly difficult equation, I noticed that my friend Jeff, who was sitting across from me, was acting strangely. I noticed that he was copying material from a paper. After watching him for a while, I dismissed the incident and got back to my test.

After the test was over, I began to think about what I had seen. The more 3
I thought about it the angrier I got. It seemed unfair that I had studied for weeks to memorize formulas and equations while all Jeff had done was to copy them onto a cheat sheet. For a moment I considered going to the teacher, but I quickly rejected this idea. After all, cheating was something everybody did. Besides, I was afraid if I told on Jeff, my friends would stop talking to me.

Now that I am in college I see the situation differently. I find it hard to 4
believe that I could ever have been so calm about cheating. Cheating is certainly something that students should not take for granted. It undercuts the education process and is unfair to teachers and to the majority of students who spend their time studying.

If I could go back to high school and relive the experience, I now know 5
that I would have gone to the teacher. Naturally Jeff would have been angry at me, but at least I would have known I had the courage to do the right thing.

Exercise 1

Write a draft of the essay you have been working on in Chapters 2 and 3. Be sure to look back at all your notes as well as your outline.

Revising Your Essay

Revision is not something you do after your paper is finished. It is a continuing process during which you consider the logic and clarity of your ideas, as well as how effectively they are presented.

Revision is not simply a matter of proofreading or editing, of crossing out one word and substituting another or correcting errors in spelling and punctuation; revision involves reseeing and rethinking what you have written. When you revise, you may find yourself adding and deleting extensively, reordering whole sentences or paragraphs as you reconsider what you want to communicate to your audience.

Revision can take a lot of time, so don't be discouraged if you have to go through three or four drafts before you think your essay is ready to hand in. The following advice can help you when you revise your essay:

- *Give yourself a cooling-off period.* Put your first draft aside for several hours or even a day or two if you can. This cooling-off period lets you distance yourself from your essay so that you can read it more objectively when you return to it. When you read it again, you will see things you missed the first time.
- *Revise on hard copy.* Because a printed-out draft shows you all the pages of your paper and enables you to see your handwritten edits, you should revise on hard copy instead of directly on the computer screen.
- *Read your draft aloud.* Before you revise, read your draft aloud to help you spot choppy sentences, missing words, or phrases that do not sound right.
- *Take advantage of opportunities to get feedback.* Your instructor may organize peer editing groups, distribute a revision checklist, refer students to a writing center, or schedule one-on-one conferences. Make use of as many of these opportunities for feedback as you can; each offers you a different way of gaining information about what you have written.
- *Try not to get overwhelmed.* It is easy to become overwhelmed by all the feedback you get about your draft. To avoid this, approach revision systematically. Don't automatically make all the changes people suggest; consider the validity of each change. Also ask yourself whether comments suggest larger issues. For example, does a comment about a series of choppy sentences suggest a need for you to add transitions, or does it mean you need to rethink your ideas?

- *Don't let your ego get in the way.* Everyone likes praise, and receiving negative criticism is never pleasant. Experienced writers know, however, that they must get feedback if they are going to improve their work. Learn to see criticism — whether from an instructor or from your peers — as a necessary part of the revision process.
- *Revise in stages.* Deal with the large elements (essay and paragraph structure) before moving on to the smaller elements (sentence structure and word choice).

How you revise — what specific strategies you decide to use — depends on your own preference, your instructor's instructions, and the time available. Like the rest of the writing process, revision varies from student to student and from assignment to assignment. Four of the most useful revision strategies are *revising with a checklist*, *revising with an outline*, *revising with a peer critique*, and *revising with your instructor's comments*.

Revising with a Checklist

If you have time, you can use the following revision checklist, adapting it to your own writing process.



CHECKLIST

Revising

- **Thesis statement** Is your thesis statement clear and specific? Does it indicate the direction your essay is taking? Is it consistent with the body of your essay? If you departed from your essay's original direction while you were writing, you may need to revise your thesis statement so that it accurately reflects the ideas and information now contained in the body.
- **Body Paragraphs** Are the body paragraphs unified? Coherent? Well developed? If not, you might have to add more facts or examples or smoother transitions. Does each body paragraph follow a particular pattern of development? Do the points you make in these paragraphs support your thesis? If not, you may need to delete material that is unrelated to the thesis statement — or revise it so that it *is* relevant.
- **Introduction and conclusion** Are your introduction and your conclusion appropriate for your material, your audience, and your purpose? Are they interesting? Do they reinforce your thesis?
- **Sentences** Are your sentences effective? Interesting? Varied in length and structure? Should any sentences be deleted, combined, or moved?
- **Words** Do your words accurately express your ideas? Should you make any changes?

Revising with an Outline

If you do not have time to consult a detailed checklist, you can check your essay's structure by making a **review outline**. Either an informal outline or a formal one can show you whether you have omitted any important points. An outline can also show you whether your essay follows a particular pattern of development. Finally, an outline can clarify the relationship between your thesis statement and your body paragraphs. (See pages 62–64 for guidelines for constructing an outline.)

Revising in a Peer Editing Group

Another revision strategy involves getting feedback from other students. Sometimes this process is formal: an instructor may require students to exchange papers and evaluate their classmates' work according to certain standards, perhaps by completing a **peer editing worksheet**. (See pages 71–72 for an example.) Often, however, soliciting feedback from others is an informal process. Even if a friend is unfamiliar with your topic, he or she can still tell you whether you are getting your point across — and maybe even advise you about how to communicate more effectively. (Remember, though, that your critic should be only your reader, not your ghostwriter.)

Getting feedback from others mirrors how people in the real world actually write. Businesspeople circulate reports to get feedback from coworkers; scientists and academics routinely collaborate when they write. (And, as you may have realized, even this book is the result of a collaboration.)

Your classmates can be helpful as you write the early drafts of your essay, providing suggestions that can guide you through the revision process. In addition, they can respond to questions you may have about your essay — for example, whether your introduction works or whether one of your supporting points needs more explanation. When friends ask *you* to critique their work, the guidelines on page 70 should help you.



TECH TIP: Revising

When you revise, make sure you do not delete text you may need later. Move this information to the end of the draft or to a separate file. That way, if you change your mind about a deletion or if you find you need information you took out of a draft, you can recover it easily.



CHECKLIST

Guidelines for Peer Critiques

- **Be positive.** Remember that your purpose is to help other students improve their essays.
- **Be tactful.** Be sure to emphasize the good points about the essay. Mention one or two things the writer has done particularly well before you offer your suggestions.
- **Be specific.** Offer concrete suggestions about what the writer could do better. Vague words like *good* or *bad* provide little help.
- **Be involved.** If you are doing a critique orally, make sure you interact with the writer. Ask questions, listen to responses, and explain your comments.
- **Look at the big picture.** Don't focus exclusively on issues such as spelling and punctuation. At this stage, the clarity of the thesis statement, the effectiveness of the support, and the organization of the writer's ideas are much more important.
- **Be thorough.** When possible, write down and explain your comments, either on a form your instructor provides or in the margins of the draft you are reviewing.

Revising with Your Instructor's Comments

Your instructor's **written comments** on a draft of your essay can also help you revise by suggesting changes in content, arrangement, or style. For example, these comments may question your logic, suggest a clearer thesis statement, ask for more explicit transitions, recommend that a paragraph be relocated, or even propose a new direction for your essay. They may also recommend stylistic changes or ask you to provide more support in one or more of your body paragraphs. You may decide to incorporate these suggestions into the next draft of your essay, or you may decide not to. Whatever the case, you should take your instructor's comments seriously and make reading and responding to them a part of your revision process.

Here is a paragraph from the first draft of Laura Bobnak's essay along with her instructor's comments.

Your tentative thesis statement is good — as far as it goes. It really doesn't address the second half of the assignment — namely, would you make the same decision today?

When I was in high school, I had an experience like the one Henry Louis Gates Jr. talks about in his essay. It was then that I saw a close friend cheat in chemistry class. As I look back at the cheating I witnessed, I wonder why I kept silent and what would have happened if I had acted.



TECH TIP: Revising

It is usually not a good idea to revise directly on the computer screen. Since most screens show only a portion of a page, the connections between ideas are hard to see and to keep track of. Even with the split-screen option that some word-processing programs offer, you cannot view several pages of a draft at once or easily compare one draft to another. For these reasons, it is a good idea to revise on a hard copy of your essay. Once you have made your handwritten corrections, you can type them into your paper.

Your instructor's **oral comments** at a one-on-one conference can also help you revise. If your instructor encourages (or requires) you to schedule a conference, come to the conference prepared. Read all your drafts carefully and bring a copy of your most recent draft as well as a list of any questions you have. During the conference, ask your instructor to clarify marginal comments or to help you revise a particular section of your essay that is giving you trouble. Make sure you take notes during the conference so that you will have a record of what you and your instructor discussed. Remember that the more prepared for the conference you are, the more you will get out of it. (Some instructors use email or video links to answer questions and to give students feedback.)

A STUDENT WRITER: Revising a First Draft

When she revised the first draft of her essay (page 66), Laura Bobnak followed the revision process discussed above. After writing her rough draft, she put it aside for a few hours and then reread it. Later, her instructor divided the class into pairs and had them read each other's essays and fill out **peer editing worksheets**. After reading and discussing the following worksheet (filled out by one of her classmates), Laura was able to focus on a number of areas that needed revision.



PEER EDITING WORKSHEET

1. What is the essay's thesis? Is it clearly worded? Does it provide a focus for the essay?

"As I look back at the cheating I witnessed, I wonder why I kept silent and what would have happened if I had acted." The thesis is clear and gives a good idea of what the essay is about.

2. Do the body paragraphs clearly support the essay's thesis? Should any of the topic sentences be revised? Which, if any, could be more clearly worded?

The topic sentences seem fine — each one seems to tell what the paragraph is about.

(continued)

3. How do the body paragraphs develop the essay's main idea? Where could the writer have used more detail?

Each of the body paragraphs tells a part of the narrative. You could add more detail about how the exam room was set up — I really can't picture the scene.

4. Can you follow the writer's ideas? Does the essay need transitions?

I have no problem following your ideas. Maybe you could have added some more transitions, but I think the essay moves OK.

5. Which points are especially clear? What questions do you have that are not answered in the essay?

I think you clearly explained what you didn't like about Jeff's cheating. I'm not sure what AP chemistry is like, though. Do people cheat because it's so hard?

6. If this were your essay, what would you change before you handed it in?

I'd add more detail and explain more about AP chemistry. Also, what were the other students doing while the cheating was going on?

7. Overall, do you think the paper is effective? Explain.

Good paper; cheating is a big issue, and I think your essay really gets this across.

A peer editing worksheet for each pattern of development appears at the end of the introductions for Chapters 6 through 15.

Points for Special Attention: First Draft

The Introduction

When she wrote her first draft, Laura knew she would eventually have to expand her introduction. At this stage, though, she was more concerned with her thesis statement — which, as her instructor's comments pointed out, didn't address the second half of the assignment: to explain whether or not she would act differently today.

Keeping in mind the feedback she received, Laura rewrote her introduction. First, she created a context for her discussion by specifically linking her story to Gates's essay. Next, she decided to postpone mentioning her subject — cheating — until later in the paper, hoping this strategy would stimulate the curiosity of her readers and make them want to read further. Finally, she revised her thesis statement to reflect the specific wording of the assignment.

The Body Paragraphs

The students in her peer editing group said Laura needed to expand her body paragraphs. Although she had expected most of her readers to be familiar with courses like advanced placement chemistry, she discovered this was not the case. In addition, some students in her group thought she should expand the paragraph in which she described her reaction to the cheating. They wondered what the other students had thought about the incident. Did they know? Did they care? Laura's classmates were curious, and they thought other readers would be, too.

Before revising the body paragraphs, Laura did some brainstorming for additional ideas. She decided to describe the difficulty of advanced placement chemistry and the pressure the students in the class had felt. She also decided to summarize discussions she had had with several of her classmates after the test. In addition, she wanted to explain in more detail her present views on cheating; she felt that the paragraph presenting these ideas did not contrast enough with the paragraphs dealing with her high school experiences.

To make sure her sentences led smoothly into one another, Laura added transitions and rewrote entire sentences when necessary, signaling the progression of her thoughts by adding words and phrases such as *therefore*, *for this reason*, *for example*, and *as a result*. In addition, she tried to repeat key words so that important concepts would be reinforced.

The Conclusion

Laura's biggest concern as she revised was to make sure her readers would see the connection between her essay and the assignment. To make this connection clear, she decided to mention in her conclusion a specific effect the incident had on her: its impact on her friendship with Jeff. She also decided to link her reactions to those of Henry Louis Gates Jr. Like him, she had been upset by the actions of someone she knew. By employing this strategy, she was able to bring her essay full circle and develop an idea she had alluded to in her introduction. Thus, rewriting her conclusion helped Laura to reinforce her thesis statement and provide closure to her essay.

A STUDENT WRITER: Revising a Second Draft

The following draft incorporates Laura's revisions, as well as some preliminary editing of grammar and punctuation.

Speaking Out

In his essay "What's in a Name?" Henry Louis Gates Jr. recalls an incident 1 from his past in which his father did not speak up. Perhaps he kept silent because he was afraid or because he knew that nothing he said or did would change the situation in Piedmont, West Virginia. Although I have never

encountered the kind of prejudice Gates describes, I did have an experience in high school where, like Gates's father, I could have spoken up but did not. As I now look back at the cheating I witnessed, I know I would not make the same decision today.

The incident I am going to describe took place during the final examination in my advanced placement chemistry class. The course was very demanding and required hours of studying every night. Every day after school, I would meet with other students to outline chapters and answer homework questions. Sometimes we would even work on weekends. We would often ask ourselves whether we had gotten in over our heads. As the semester dragged on, it became clear to me, as well as to the other students in the class, that passing the course was not something we could take for granted. Test after test came back with grades that were well below the "As" and "Bs" I was used to getting in the regular chemistry course I took in tenth grade. By the time we were ready to take the final exam, most of us were worried that we would fail the course — despite the teacher's assurances that she would mark on a curve. 2

The final examination for advanced placement chemistry was given on a Friday morning from nine to twelve o'clock. As I struggled to balance a particularly complex equation, I noticed that the person sitting across from me was acting strangely. I thought I was imagining things, but as I stared I saw Jeff, my friend and study partner, fumbling with his test booklet. I realized that he was copying material from a paper he had taped inside the cuff of his shirt. After watching him for a while, I dismissed the incident and finished my test. 3

Surprisingly, when I mentioned the incident to others in the class, they all knew what Jeff had done. The more I thought about Jeff's actions, the angrier I got. It seemed unfair that I had studied for weeks to memorize formulas and equations while all Jeff had done was to copy them onto a cheat sheet. For a moment I considered going to the teacher, but I quickly rejected this idea. Cheating was nothing new to me or to others in my school. Many of my classmates cheated at one time or another. Most of us saw school as a war between us and the teachers, and cheating was just another weapon in our arsenal. The worst crime I could commit would be to turn Jeff in. As far as I was concerned, I had no choice. I fell in line with the values of my high school classmates and dismissed the incident as "no big deal." 4

I find it hard to believe that I could ever have been so complacent about cheating. The issues that were simple in high school now seem complex. I now ask questions that never would have occurred to me in high school. Interestingly, Jeff and I are no longer very close. Whenever I see him, I have the same reaction Henry Louis Gates Jr. had when he met Mr. Wilson after he had insulted his father. 5

Points for Special Attention: Second Draft

Laura could see that her second draft was stronger than her first, but she decided to schedule a conference with her instructor to help her improve her draft further.

The Introduction

Although Laura was satisfied with her introduction, her instructor identified a problem during a conference. Laura had assumed that everyone reading her essay would be familiar with Gates's essay. However, her instructor pointed out that this might not be the case. So he suggested that she add a brief explanation of the problems Gates's father had faced in order to accommodate readers who didn't know about or remember Gates's comments.

The Body Paragraphs

After rereading her first body paragraph, Laura thought she could sharpen its focus. Her instructor agreed, suggesting she delete the first sentence of the paragraph, which seemed too conversational. She also decided she could delete the sentences that explained how difficult advanced placement chemistry was — even though she had added this material at the suggestion of a classmate. After all, cheating, not advanced placement chemistry, was the subject of her paper. She realized that if she included this kind of detail, she ran the risk of distracting readers from the real subject of her discussion.

Her instructor also pointed out that in the second body paragraph, the first and second sentences did not seem to be connected, so Laura decided to connect these ideas by adding a short discussion of her own reaction to the test. Her instructor also suggested that Laura add more transitional words and phrases to this paragraph to clarify the sequence of events she was describing. Phrases such as *at first* and *about a minute passed* would help readers follow her discussion.

Laura thought the third body paragraph was her best, but, even so, she thought she needed to add more material. She and her instructor decided she should expand her discussion of the students' reactions to cheating. More information — perhaps some dialogue — would help Laura make the point that cheating was condoned by the students in her class.

The Conclusion

Laura's conclusion began by mentioning her present attitude toward cheating and then suddenly shifted to the effect cheating had on her relationship with Jeff. Her instructor suggested that she revise by taking her discussion about her current view of cheating out of her conclusion

and putting it in a separate paragraph. By doing this, she could focus her conclusion on the effect cheating had on both Jeff and her. This strategy enabled Laura to present her views about cheating in more detail and also helped her end her essay forcefully.

Working with Sources

Her instructor also suggested that Laura consider adding a quotation from Gates's essay to her conclusion. He thought that Gates's words would clearly connect his experience to Laura's. He reminded her not to forget to document the quotation and to use correct MLA documentation format (as explained and illustrated in Chapter 18 of this text).

The Title

Laura's original title was only a working title, and now she wanted one that would create interest and draw readers into her essay. She knew, however, that a humorous, cute, or catchy title would undermine the seriousness of her essay. After she rejected a number of possibilities, she decided on "The Price of Silence." This title was thought provoking and also descriptive, and it prepared readers for what was to follow in the essay.

CHOOSING A TITLE

Because it is the first thing in your essay that readers see, your title should create interest. Usually, single-word titles and cute ones do little to draw readers into your essay. To be effective, a title should reflect your purpose and your tone. The titles of some of the essays in this book illustrate the various kinds of titles you can use:

Statement of essay's focus: "Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts"

Question: "Who Killed Benny Paret?"

Unusual angle: "Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police"

Controversy: "A Peaceful Woman Explains Why She Carries a Gun"

Provocative wording: "No Wonder They Call Me a Bitch"

Quotation: "The 'Black Table' Is Still There"

Humor: "The Dog Ate My Disk, and Other Tales of Woe"

A STUDENT WRITER: Preparing a Final Draft

Based on the decisions she made during and after her conference, Laura revised and edited her draft and handed in this final version of her essay.

The Price of Silence

*Introduction
(provides
background)*

In his essay “What’s in a Name?” Henry Louis Gates Jr. 1
recalls an incident from his past in which his father encountered
prejudice and did not speak up. Perhaps he kept silent because he
was afraid or because he knew that nothing he said or did would
change the racial situation in Piedmont, West Virginia. Although
I have never encountered the kind of prejudice Gates describes, I
did have an experience in high school where, like Gates’s father, I
could have spoken out but did not. As I look back at the cheating
incident that I witnessed, I realize that I have outgrown the
immaturity and lack of confidence that made me keep silent.

Thesis statement

Narrative begins

In my senior year in high school I, along with fifteen other 2
students, took advanced placement chemistry. The course was very
demanding and required hours of studying every night. As the
semester dragged on, it became clear to me, as well as to the other
students in the class, that passing the course was not something
we could take for granted. Test after test came back with grades
that were well below the As and Bs I was used to getting in the
regular chemistry course I had taken in tenth grade. By the time
we were ready to take the final exam, most of us were worried that
we would fail the course — despite the teacher’s assurances that
she would mark on a curve.

Key incident occurs

The final examination for advanced placement chemistry 3
was given on a Friday morning between nine o’clock and noon.
I had studied all that week, but, even so, I found the test
difficult. I knew the material, but I had a hard time answering
the long questions that were asked. As I struggled to balance
a particularly complex equation, I noticed that the person
sitting across from me was acting strangely. At first I thought I
was imagining things, but as I stared I saw Jeff, my friend and
study partner, fumbling with his test booklet. About a minute
passed before I realized that he was copying material from a paper
he had taped to the inside of his shirt cuff. After a short time, I
stopped watching him and finished my test.

*Narrative continues:
reactions to the
incident*

It was not until after the test that I began thinking about what I had seen. Surprisingly, when I mentioned the incident to others in the class, they all knew what Jeff had done. Some even thought that Jeff's actions were justified. "After all," one student said, "the test was hard." But the more I thought about Jeff's actions, the angrier I got. It seemed unfair that I had studied for weeks to memorize formulas and equations while all Jeff had done was copy them onto a cheat sheet. For a moment I considered going to the teacher, but I quickly rejected this idea. Cheating was nothing new to me or to others in my school. Many of my classmates cheated at one time or another. Most of us saw school as a war between us and the teachers, and cheating was just another weapon in our arsenal. The worst crime I could commit would be to turn Jeff in. As far as I was concerned, I had no choice. I fell in line with the values of my high school classmates and dismissed the incident as "no big deal."

Narrative ends

*Analysis of key
incident*

Now that I am in college, however, I see the situation differently. I find it hard to believe that I could ever have been so complacent about cheating. The issues that were simple in high school now seem complex — especially in light of the honor code that I follow in college. I now ask questions that never would have occurred to me in high school. What, for example, are the implications of cheating? What would happen to the educational system if cheating became the norm? What are my obligations to all those who are involved in education? Aren't teachers and students interested in achieving a common goal? The answers to these questions give me a sense of the far-reaching effects of my failure to act. If confronted with the same situation today, I know I would speak out regardless of the consequences.

Jeff is now a first-year student at the state university and, like me, he was given credit for AP chemistry. I feel certain that by not turning him in, I failed not only myself but also Jeff. I gave in to peer pressure instead of doing what I knew to be right. The worst that would have happened to Jeff had I spoken up is that he would have had to repeat chemistry in summer school. By doing so, he would have proven to himself that he could, like the rest of us in the class, pass on his own. In the long run, this knowledge would have served him better than the knowledge that he could cheat whenever he faced a difficult situation.

4

5

6

*Conclusion
(aftermath
of incident)*

Interestingly, Jeff and I are no longer very close. Whenever I see him, I have the same reaction Henry Louis Gates Jr. had when he met Mr. Wilson after he had insulted his father: "I never again looked [him] in the eye" (7).

Work Cited

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. "What's in a Name?" *Patterns for College Writing*. 12th ed. Ed. Laurie G. Kirsznner and Stephen R. Mandell. Boston: Bedford, 2012. 2–4. Print.

With each draft of her essay, Laura sharpened the focus of her discussion. In the process, she clarified her thoughts about her subject and reached some new and interesting conclusions. Although much of Laura's paper is a narrative, it also includes a contrast between her current ideas about cheating and the ideas she had in high school. Perhaps Laura could have explained the reasons behind her current ideas about cheating more fully. Even so, her paper gives a straightforward account of the incident and analyzes its significance without drifting off into clichés or simplistic moralizing. Especially effective is Laura's conclusion, in which she discusses the long-term effects of her experience and quotes Gates. By placing this discussion at the end of her essay, she makes sure her readers will not lose sight of the implications of her experience. Finally, Laura documents the quotation she uses in her conclusion and includes a works-cited page at the end of her essay.

Exercise 2

Use the checklist on page 68 to help you revise your draft. If you prefer, outline your draft and use that outline to help you revise.

Exercise 3

Have another student read your second draft. Then, using the student's peer critique checklist on page 70 as your guide, revise your draft.

Exercise 4

Using the essay on pages 77–79 as your guide, label the final draft of your own essay. In addition to identifying your introduction, conclusion, and thesis statement, you should also label the main points of your essay.

Editing and Proofreading

When you finish revising your essay, it is tempting to print it out, hand it in, and breathe a sigh of relief. This is one temptation you should resist. You still have to *edit* and *proofread* your paper to correct any problems that may remain after you revise.

When you **edit**, you search for grammatical errors, check punctuation, and look over your sentence style and word choice one last time. When you **proofread**, you look for surface errors, such as spelling errors, typos, incorrect spacing, or problems with your essay's format. The idea is to look carefully for any error, no matter how small, that might weaken your essay's message or undermine your credibility. Remember, this is your last chance to make sure your essay says exactly what you want it to say.

Editing for Grammar

As you edit, keep in mind that certain grammatical errors occur more frequently than others — and even more frequently in particular kinds of writing. By concentrating on these errors, as well as on those errors you yourself are most likely to make, you will learn to edit your essays quickly and efficiently.

Learning the few rules that follow will help you identify the most common errors. Later on, when you practice writing essays in various patterns of development, you can use the **Grammar in Context** section in each chapter to help you correct any errors you find.

Be Sure Subjects and Verbs Agree

Subjects and verbs must agree in number. A singular subject takes a singular verb.

Stephanie Ericsson discusses ten kinds of liars.

A plural subject takes a plural verb.

Chronic liars are different from occasional liars.

Liars and plagiarists have a lot in common.

For information on editing for subject-verb agreement with indefinite pronoun subjects, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 15 (page 657).

Be Sure Verb Tenses Are Accurate and Consistent

Unintentional shifts in verb tense can be confusing to readers. Verb tenses in the same passage should be the same unless you are referring to two different time periods.

Single time period:

Lee ^{*past tense*} surrendered to Grant on April 9, 1865, and then he ^{*past tense*} addressed his men.

Two different time periods:

In “Two Ways to Belong in America,” Bharati Mukherjee ^{*present tense*} compares herself and her sister, both of whom ^{*past tense*} emigrated from India.

For more information on editing for consistent verb tenses, as well as to eliminate unwarranted shifts in voice, person, and mood, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 9 (page 268).

Be Sure Pronoun References Are Clear

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun in a sentence. Every pronoun should clearly refer to a specific **antecedent**, the word (a noun or pronoun) it replaces. Pronouns and antecedents must agree in number.

- Singular pronouns refer to singular antecedents.

When she was attacked, Kitty Genovese was on her way home.

- Plural pronouns refer to plural antecedents.

The people who watched the attack gave different reasons for their failure to help.

For information on editing for pronoun-antecedent agreement with indefinite pronouns, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 15 (page 658).

Be Sure Sentences Are Complete

A **sentence** is a group of words that includes a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. A **fragment** is an incomplete sentence, one that is missing a subject, a verb, or both a subject and a verb — or that has a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought.

Sentence:	Although it was written in 1963, Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” remains powerful today.
Fragment (no subject):	Remains powerful today.
Fragment (no verb):	Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”
Fragment (no subject or verb):	Written in 1963.
Fragment (includes subject and verb but does not express a complete thought):	Although it was written in 1963.

To correct a sentence fragment, you need to supply the missing part of the sentence (a subject, a verb, or both — or an entire independent clause). Often, you will find that the missing words appear in an adjacent sentence in your essay.

Be Careful Not to Run Sentences Together without Proper Punctuation

There are two kinds of **run-ons**: *comma splices* and *fused sentences*.

A **comma splice** is an error that occurs when two independent clauses are connected by just a comma.

Comma splice:	Women who live alone need to learn to protect themselves, sometimes this means carrying a gun.
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A **fused sentence** is an error that occurs when two independent clauses are connected without any punctuation.

Fused sentence:	Residents of isolated rural areas may carry guns for protection, sometimes these guns may be used against them.
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For more information on editing run-ons, including additional ways to correct them, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 6 (page 102).

Be Careful to Avoid Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Modifiers are words and phrases that describe other words in a sentence. To avoid confusion, place modifiers as close as possible to the words they modify.

Limited by their illiteracy, millions of Americans are ashamed to seek help.

Hoping to draw attention to their plight, Jonathan Kozol wrote *Illiterate America*.

A **misplaced modifier** appears to modify the wrong word because it is placed incorrectly in the sentence.

Misplaced modifier: Judith Ortiz Cofer wonders why Latin women are so often stereotyped as either “hot tamales” or low-level workers in her essay “The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria” (232). (*Does Cofer’s essay stereotype Latin women?*)

Correct: In her essay “The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria,” Judith Ortiz Cofer wonders why Latin women are so often stereotyped as either “hot tamales” or low-level workers (232).

A **dangling modifier** “dangles” because it cannot logically describe any word in the sentence.

Dangling modifier: Going back to his old junior high school, the “black table” was still there. (*Who went back to his old school?*)

Correct: Going back to his old junior high school, Graham discovered that the “black table” was still there.

For more information on editing to correct misplaced and dangling modifiers, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 7 (page 160).

Be Sure Sentence Elements Are Parallel

Parallelism is the use of matching grammatical elements (words, phrases, clauses) to express similar ideas. Used effectively — for example, with paired items or items in a series — parallelism makes the links between related ideas clear and emphasizes connections.

Paired items: As Deborah Tannen points out, men speak more than women in public but less than women at home (423).

Items in a series: Amy Tan says, “I spend a great deal of my time thinking about the power of language — the way it can evoke an emotion, a visual image, a complex idea, or a simple truth” (466).

Faulty parallelism — using items that are not parallel in a context in which parallelism is expected — makes ideas difficult to follow and will likely confuse your readers.

Faulty parallelism: As Deborah Tannen points out, men speak more than women in public, but at home less talking is done by them (423).

Faulty parallelism: Amy Tan says, “I spend a great deal of my time thinking about the power of language — the way it can evoke an emotion, visual images, or complex ideas can be suggested, or communicate a simple truth” (466).

For more information on using parallelism to strengthen your writing, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 11 (page 378).



CHECKLIST

Editing for Grammar

- **Subject-verb agreement** Do all your verbs agree with their subjects? Remember that singular subjects take singular verbs, and plural subjects take plural verbs.
- **Verb tenses** Are all your verb tenses accurate and consistent? Have you avoided unnecessary shifts in tense?
- **Pronoun reference** Do pronouns clearly refer to their antecedents?
- **Fragments** Does each group of words punctuated as a sentence have both a subject and a verb and express a complete thought? If not, can you correct the fragment by adding the missing words or by attaching it to an adjacent sentence?
- **Run-ons** Have you been careful not to connect two independent clauses without the necessary punctuation? Have you avoided comma splices and fused sentences?
- **Modification** Does every modifier point clearly to the word it modifies? Have you avoided misplaced and dangling modifiers?
- **Parallelism** Have you used matching words, phrases, or clauses to express equivalent ideas? Have you avoided faulty parallelism?

For practice in editing for grammar, visit the resources for Chapter 5 at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.

Editing for Punctuation

Like grammatical errors, certain punctuation errors are more common than others, particularly in certain contexts. By understanding a few

punctuation rules, you can learn to identify and correct these errors in your writing.

Learn When to Use Commas — and When Not to Use Them

Commas separate certain elements of a sentence. They are used most often in the following situations:

- To separate an introductory phrase or clause from the rest of the sentence

In “Only Daughter,” Sandra Cisneros writes about her father.

According to Cisneros, he is very critical of her.

Although her father has six sons, she is the only daughter.

NOTE: Do not use a comma if a dependent clause *follows* an independent clause: She is the only daughter although her father has six sons.

- To separate two independent clauses that are joined by a coordinating conjunction

Cisneros tries to please her father, but he is not impressed.

- To separate elements in a series

Cisneros has written stories, essays, poems, and a novel.

For more information on using commas in a series, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 8 (page 217).

- To separate a **nonrestrictive clause** (a clause that does not supply information that is essential to the sentence’s meaning) from the rest of the sentence

Cisneros, who is the only daughter, feels her father would prefer her to be a son.

NOTE: Do not use commas to set off a **restrictive clause** (a clause that supplies information that is vital to the sentence’s meaning): The child who is overlooked is often the daughter.

Learn When to Use Semicolons

Semicolons, like commas, separate certain elements of a sentence. However, semicolons separate only grammatically equivalent elements — for example, two closely related independent clauses.

In Burma, George Orwell learned something about the nature of imperialism; it was not an easy lesson.

Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery” is fiction; however, many early readers thought it was a true story.

In most cases, commas separate items in a series. However, when one or more of the items in a series already include commas, separate the items with semicolons. This will make the sentence easier to follow.

Orwell set his works in Paris, France; London, England; and Moulmein, Burma.

Learn When to Use Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used to set off quoted speech or writing.

At the end of his essay, E. B. White feels “the chill of death” (199).

Special rules govern the use of other punctuation marks with quotation marks:

- Commas and periods are always placed before quotation marks.
- Colons and semicolons are always placed after quotation marks.
- Question marks and exclamation points can go either before or after quotation marks, depending on whether or not they are part of the quoted material.

Quotation marks are also used to set off the titles of essays (“Once More to the Lake”), stories (“The Lottery”), and poems (“Sadie and Maud”).

NOTE: Italics are used to set off titles of books, periodicals, and plays: *Life on the Mississippi*, *College English*, *Hamlet*.

For information on formatting quotations in research papers, see Chapter 17.

Learn When to Use Dashes and Colons

Dashes are occasionally used to set off and emphasize information within a sentence.

Jessica Mitford wrote a scathing critique of the funeral industry — and touched off an uproar. Her book *The American Way of Death* was widely read around the world.

However, because this usage is somewhat informal, dashes should be used in moderation in your college writing.

Colons are used to introduce lists, examples, and clarifications. A colon should always be preceded by a complete sentence.

As Norman Cousins observes in “Who Killed Benny Paret?” one simple cause was ultimately responsible for Paret’s death: the fact that spectators came to the fight expecting to see a knockout.

For more information on using colons, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 12 (page 441).

**CHECKLIST****Editing for Punctuation**

- **Commas** Have you used commas when necessary — and only when necessary?
- **Semicolons** Have you used semicolons only between grammatically equivalent elements?
- **Quotation marks** Have you used quotation marks to set off quoted speech or writing and to set off titles of essays, stories, and poems? Have you used other punctuation correctly with quotation marks?
- **Dashes and colons** Have you used dashes in moderation? Is every colon that introduces a list, an example, or a clarification preceded by a complete sentence?

For practice in editing for punctuation, visit the resources for Chapter 5 at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.

Exercise 1

Reread the essay you wrote in Chapters 2–4, and edit it for grammar and punctuation.

**TECH TIP: Editing**

Just as you do when you revise, you should edit on a hard copy of your essay. Seeing your work on the printed page makes it easy for you to spot surface-level errors in grammar and punctuation. You can also run a grammar check to help you find grammar and punctuation errors, but you should keep in mind that grammar checkers are far from perfect. They often miss errors (such as faulty modification), and they frequently highlight areas of text (such as a long sentence) that may not contain an error.

Exercise 2

Run a grammar check, and then make any additional corrections you think are necessary.

Editing for Sentence Style and Word Choice

As you edit your essay for grammar and punctuation, you should also be looking one last time at how you construct sentences and choose words. So that your essay is as clear, readable, and convincing as possible, your sentences should be not only correct but also concise and varied. In addition, every word should mean exactly what you want it to mean, and your language should be free of clichés.

Eliminate Awkward Phrasing

As you review your essay's sentences, check carefully for awkward phrasing, and do your best to smooth it out.

Awkward: The reason Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence was because he felt the king was a tyrant.

Correct: The reason Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence was that he felt the king was a tyrant.

For more information about this error, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 10 (page 331).

Awkward: Work is where you earn money.

Correct: Work is the activity you do to earn money.

For more information about this error, see the [Grammar in Context](#) section of Chapter 13 (page 495).

Be Sure Your Sentences Are Concise

A **concise** sentence is efficient; it is not overloaded with extra words and complicated constructions. To make sentences concise, you need to eliminate repetition and redundancy, delete empty words and expressions, and cut everything that is not absolutely necessary.

Wordy: Brent Staples's essay "Just Walk On By" explores his feelings, thoughts, and ideas about various events and experiences that were painful to him as a black man living in a large metropolitan city.

Concise: Brent Staples's essay "Just Walk On By" explores his ideas about his painful experiences as a black man living in a large city.

Be Sure Your Sentences Are Varied

To add interest to your paper, vary the length and structure of your sentences, and vary the way you open them.

- Mix long and short sentences.

As time went on, and as he saw people's hostile reactions to him, Staples grew more and more uneasy. Then, he had an idea.

- Mix simple, compound, and complex sentences.

Simple sentence (*one independent clause*): Staples grew more and more uneasy.

Compound sentence (*two independent clauses*): Staples grew more and more uneasy, but he stood his ground.

Complex sentence (*dependent clause, independent clause*): Although Staples grew more and more uneasy, he continued to walk in the neighborhood.

For more information on how to form compound and complex sentences, see the **Grammar in Context** section of Chapter 14 (page 543).

- Vary your sentence openings. Instead of beginning every sentence with the subject (particularly with a pronoun like *he* or *this*), begin some sentences with an introductory word, phrase, or clause that ties it to the preceding sentence.

The 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese, discussed in Martin Gansberg's "Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police," remains relevant today for a number of reasons. For one thing, urban crime remains a problem, particularly for women. Moreover, many people are still reluctant to report crimes. Although nearly fifty years have gone by, the story of Kitty Genovese and the people who watched her die and did nothing still stirs strong emotional responses.

Choose Your Words Carefully

- Choose **specific** words that identify particular examples and details.

Vague: Violence in sports is a bad thing.

Specific: Violence in boxing is a serious problem that threatens not just the lives of the boxers but also the sport itself.

- Avoid **clichés**, overused expressions that rely on tired figures of speech.

Clichés: When he was hit, the boxer stood for a moment like a deer caught in the headlights, and then he fell to the mat like a ton of bricks.

Revised: When he was hit, the boxer stood frozen for a moment, and then he fell to the mat.



CHECKLIST

Editing for Sentence Style and Word Choice

- **Awkward phrasing** Have you eliminated awkward constructions?
- **Concise sentences** Have you eliminated repetition, empty phrases, and excess words? Is every sentence as concise as it can be?
- **Varied sentences** Have you varied the length and structure of your sentences? Have you varied your sentence openings?
- **Word choice** Have you selected specific words? Have you eliminated clichés?

For practice in editing for sentence style and word choice, visit the resources for Chapter 5 online at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.

Exercise 3

Check your essay's sentence style and word choice.

Proofreading Your Essay

When you proofread, you check your essay for surface errors, such as commonly confused words, misspellings, faulty capitalization, and incorrect italic use; then, you check for typographical errors.

Check for Commonly Confused Words

Even if you have carefully considered your choice of words during the editing stage, you may have missed some errors. As you proofread, look carefully to see if you can spot any **commonly confused words** — *its* for *it's*, *there* for *their*, or *affect* for *effect*, for example — that a spell check will not catch.

For more information on how to distinguish between *affect* and *effect*, see the **Grammar in Context** section of Chapter 10 (page 332).

Check for Misspellings and Faulty Capitalization

It makes no sense to work hard on an essay and then undermine your credibility with spelling and mechanical errors. If you have any doubt about how a word is spelled or whether or not to capitalize it, check a dictionary (in print or online).

Check for Typos

The last step in the proofreading process is to read carefully and look for typos. Make sure you have spaced correctly between words and have not accidentally typed an extra letter, omitted a letter, or transposed two letters. Reading your essay *backwards* — one sentence at a time — will help you focus on individual sentences, which in turn will help you see errors more clearly.



CHECKLIST

Proofreading

- **Commonly confused words** Have you proofread for errors involving words that are often confused with each other?
- **Misspelled words and faulty capitalization** Have you proofread for errors in spelling and capitalization? Have you run a spell check?
- **Typos** Have you checked carefully to eliminate typing errors?

For more practice with proofreading, visit the resources for Chapter 5 online at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.



TECH TIP: Spell Checkers

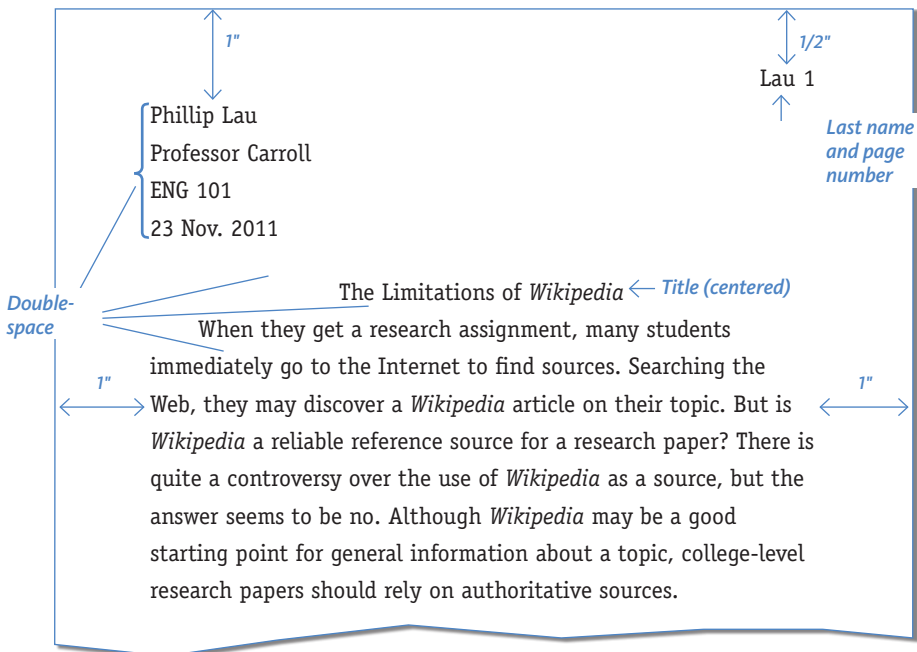
You should certainly run a spell check to help you locate misspelled words and incorrect strings of letters caused by typos, but keep in mind that a spell checker will not find every error. For example, it will not identify many misspelled proper nouns or foreign words, nor will it highlight words that are spelled correctly but used incorrectly — *work* for *word* or *form* for *from*, for example. For this reason, you must still proofread carefully — even after you run a spell check.

Exercise 4

Proofread your essay.

Checking Your Paper's Format

The final thing to consider is your paper's **format** — how your paragraphs, sentences, and words look on the page. Your instructor will give you some general guidelines about format — telling you, for example, to type your last name and the page number at the top right of each page — and, of course, you should follow these guidelines. Students writing in the humanities usually follow the format illustrated below. (For information on MLA documentation format, see Chapter 18.)



**CHECKLIST****Checking Your Paper's Format**

- **Format** Have you followed your instructor's format guidelines?
- **Spacing** Have you double-spaced throughout?
- **Type size** Have you used ten- or twelve-point type?
- **Paragraphing** Have you indented the first line of every paragraph?
- **Visuals** If you used one or more visuals in your essay, did you insert each visual as close as possible to where it is discussed?
- **Documentation** Have you documented each source — and each visual — you used? Have you included a works-cited page?

Exercise 5

Make any necessary corrections to your essay's format, and then print out a final draft.

PART TWO

Readings for Writers

The relationship between reading and writing is a complex one. Sometimes you will write an essay based on your own experience; more often than not, however, you will respond in writing to something you have read. The essays in this book give you a chance to do both.

As you are probably aware, the fact that information appears in print or on the Internet does not mean it should be taken at face value. Of course, many of the books and articles you read will be reliable, but some — especially material found on many Web sites and blogs — will include contradictions, biased ideas, or even inaccurate or misleading information. For this reason, your goal should not be simply to understand what you read but to assess the credibility of the writers and, eventually, to judge the soundness of their ideas.

When you read the essays in this book, you should approach them critically. In other words, you should question (and sometimes challenge) the writer's ideas — and, in the process, try to create new interpretations that you can explore in your writing. Approaching a text in this way is not easy, for it requires you to develop your own analytical and critical skills and your own set of standards to help you judge and interpret what you read. Only after you have read and critically evaluated a text can you begin to draw your ideas together and write about them.

Every reading selection in Chapters 6 through 15 is accompanied by a series of questions intended to guide you through the reading process. In many ways, these questions are a warm-up for the intellectual workout of writing an essay. The more time you devote to them, the more you will be practicing your analytical skills. In a real sense, then, these questions will help you develop the critical thinking skills you will need when you write. In becoming a proficient reader, you will also gain confidence in yourself as a writer.

Each of the reading selections in Chapters 6 through 14 is organized around one dominant pattern of development. In your outside reading, however, you will often find more than one pattern used in a single piece of writing (as in Chapter 15, *Combining the Patterns*, page 655). When you write, then, do not feel you must follow these patterns blindly; instead, think of them as tools for making your writing more effective, and adapt them to your subject, your audience, and your purpose for writing.

In addition to the reading selections, each chapter also includes a visual text — for example, a piece of fine art, an advertisement, or a photograph. By visually reinforcing the chapter's basic rhetorical concept, each visual text serves as a bridge to the chapter's essays. Following each visual is a set of questions designed to help you understand not just the image but also the rhetorical pattern that is the chapter's focus.

Narration

What Is Narration?

Narration tells a story by presenting events in an orderly, logical sequence. In the following paragraph from “The Stone Horse,” essayist Barry Lopez recounts the history of the exploration of the California desert.

Topic sentence

Narrative traces developments through the nineteenth century

Western man did not enter the California desert until the end of the eighteenth century, 250 years after Coronado brought his soldiers into the Zuni pueblos in a bewildered search for the cities of Cibola. The earliest appraisals of the land were cursory, hurried. People traveled *through* it, en route to Santa Fe or the California coastal settlements. Only miners tarried. In 1823 what had been Spain’s became Mexico’s, and in 1848 what had been Mexico’s became America’s; but the bare, jagged mountains and dry lake beds, the vast and uniform plains of creosote bush and yucca plants, remained as obscure as the northern Sudan until the end of the nineteenth century.

Narration can be the dominant pattern in many kinds of writing (as well as in speech). Histories, biographies, and autobiographies follow a narrative form, as do personal letters, diaries, journals, and bios on personal Web pages or social networking sites, such as Facebook. Narration is the dominant pattern in many works of fiction and poetry, and it is an essential part of casual conversation. Narration also underlies folk and fairy tales and radio and television news reports. In short, anytime you tell what happened, you are using narration.

Using Narration

Narration can provide the structure for an entire essay, but narrative passages may also appear in essays that are not primarily narrative. In an argumentative essay supporting stricter gun-safety legislation, for example,

you might devote one or two paragraphs to the story of a child accidentally killed by a handgun. In this chapter, however, we focus on narration as the dominant pattern of a piece of writing.

During your college career, many of your assignments will call for narration. In an English composition class, you may be asked to write about an experience that was important to your development as an adult; on a European history exam, you may need to relate the events that led to Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo; and in a technical writing class, you may be asked to write a letter of complaint tracing a company's negligent actions. In each of these situations (as well as in many additional assignments), your writing has a primarily narrative structure, and the narrative supports a particular thesis.

The skills you develop in narrative writing will also help you in other kinds of writing. A *process essay*, such as an explanation of a laboratory experiment, is like a narrative because it outlines a series of steps in chronological order; a *cause-and-effect essay*, such as your answer to an exam question that asks you to analyze the events that caused the Great Depression, also resembles a narrative in that it traces a sequence of events. Although a process essay explains how to do something and a cause-and-effect essay explains why events occur, writing both these kinds of essays will be easier after you master narration. (Process essays and cause-and-effect essays are dealt with in Chapters 9 and 10, respectively.)

Planning a Narrative Essay

Developing a Thesis Statement

Although the purpose of a narrative may be simply to recount events or to create a particular mood or impression, in college writing a narrative essay is more likely to present a sequence of events for the purpose of supporting a thesis. For instance, in a narrative about your problems with credit card debt, your purpose may be to show your readers that college students should not have easy access to credit cards. Accordingly, you do not simply tell the story of your unwise spending. Rather, you select and arrange details to show your readers why having a credit card encouraged you to spend money you didn't have. Although it is usually best to include an explicit **thesis statement** ("My negative experiences with credit have convinced me that college students should not have access to credit cards"), you may also imply your thesis through your selection and arrangement of events.

Including Enough Detail

Narratives, like other types of writing, need rich, specific details if they are to be convincing. Each detail should help to create a picture for the reader; even exact times, dates, and geographic locations can be helpful.

Look, for example, at the following paragraph from the essay “My Mother Never Worked” by Bonnie Smith-Yackel, which appears later in this chapter:

In the winter she sewed night after night, endlessly, begging cast-off clothing from relatives, ripping apart coats, dresses, blouses, and trousers to remake them to fit her four daughters and son. Every morning and every evening she milked cows, fed pigs and calves, cared for chickens, picked eggs, cooked meals, washed dishes, scrubbed floors, and tended and loved her children. In the spring she planted a garden once more, dragging pails of water to nourish and sustain the vegetables for the family. In 1936 she lost a baby in her sixth month.

This list of details adds interest and authenticity to the narrative. The central figure in the narrative is a busy, productive woman, and readers know this because they are given an exhaustive catalog of her activities.

Varying Sentence Structure

When narratives present a long series of events, all the sentences can begin to sound alike: “She sewed dresses. She milked cows. She fed pigs. She fed calves. She cared for chickens.” Such a predictable string of sentences may become monotonous for your readers. You can eliminate this monotony by varying your sentence structure — for instance, by using a variety of sentence openings or by combining simple sentences as Smith-Yackel does: “In the winter she sewed night after night, endlessly. . . . Every morning and every evening she milked cows, fed pigs and calves, cared for chickens. . . .”

Maintaining Clear Narrative Order

Many narratives present events in the exact order in which they occurred, moving from first event to last. Whether or not you follow a strict **chronological order** depends on the purpose of your narrative. If you are writing a straightforward account of a historical event or summarizing a record of poor management practices, you will probably want to move directly from beginning to end. In a personal-experience essay or a fictional narrative, however, you may want to engage your readers’ interest by beginning with an event from the middle of your story, or even from the end, and then presenting the events that led up to it. You may also decide to begin in the present and then use one or more **flashbacks** (shifts into the past) to tell your story. To help readers follow the order of events in your narrative, it is very important to use correct verb tenses and clear transitional words and phrases.

Using Accurate Verb Tenses. **Verb tense** is extremely important in writing that recounts events in a fixed order because tenses indicate temporal (time) relationships. When you write a narrative, you should be careful to keep verb tenses consistent and accurate so that your readers can

follow the sequence of events. Naturally, you must shift tenses to reflect an actual time shift in your narrative. For instance, convention requires that you use present tense when discussing works of literature (“When Hamlet’s mother *marries* his uncle . . .”), but a flashback to an earlier point in the story calls for a shift from present to past tense (“Before their marriage, Hamlet *was* . . .”). Nevertheless, you should avoid unwarranted shifts in verb tense; they will make your narrative confusing.

Using Transitions. Transitions — connecting words or phrases — help link events in time, enabling narratives to flow smoothly. Without them, narratives would lack coherence, and readers would be unsure of the correct sequence of events. Transitions indicate the order of events, and they also signal shifts in time. In narrative writing, the transitions commonly used for these purposes include *first, second, next, then, later, at the same time, meanwhile, immediately, soon, before, earlier, after, afterward, now, and finally*. In addition to these transitional words and phrases, specific time markers — such as *three years later, in 1927, after two hours, and on January 3* — indicate how much time has passed between events. (A more complete list of transitions appears on page 57.)

Structuring a Narrative Essay

Like other essays, a **narrative** essay has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. If your essay’s thesis is explicitly stated, it will, in most cases, appear in the **introduction**. The **body paragraphs** of your essay will recount the events that make up your narrative, following a clear and orderly plan. Finally, the **conclusion** will give your readers the sense that your narrative is complete, perhaps by restating your thesis or by summarizing key points or events.

Suppose you are assigned a short history paper about the Battle of Waterloo. You plan to support the thesis that if Napoleon had kept more troops in reserve, he might have defeated the British troops serving under Wellington. Based on this thesis, you decide that the best way to organize your paper is to present the five major phases of the battle in chronological order. An informal outline of your essay might look like this:

SAMPLE OUTLINE: Narration

Introduction:	Thesis statement — If Napoleon had kept more troops in reserve, he might have broken Wellington’s line with another infantry attack and thus won the Battle of Waterloo.
Phase 1 of the battle:	Napoleon attacked the Château of Hougoumont.
Phase 2 of the battle:	The French infantry attacked the British lines.

Phase 3 of the battle:	The French cavalry staged a series of charges against the British lines that had not been attacked before; Napoleon committed his reserves.
Phase 4 of the battle:	The French captured La Haye Sainte, their first success of the day but an advantage that Napoleon, having committed troops elsewhere, could not maintain without reserves.
Phase 5 of the battle:	The French infantry was decisively defeated by the combined thrust of the British infantry and the remaining British cavalry.
Conclusion:	Restatement of thesis or review of key points or events.

By discussing the five phases of the battle in chronological order, you clearly support your thesis. As you expand your informal outline into a historical narrative, exact details, dates, times, and geographic locations are extremely important. Without them, your statements are open to question. In addition, to keep your readers aware of the order of events, you must select appropriate transitional words and phrases and pay careful attention to verb tenses.

Revising a Narrative Essay

When you revise a narrative essay, consider the items on the revision checklist on page 68. In addition, pay special attention to the items on the following checklist, which apply specifically to revising narrative essays.



REVISION CHECKLIST

Narration

- Does your assignment call for narration?
- Does your essay's thesis communicate the significance of the events you discuss?
- Have you included enough specific detail?
- Have you varied your sentence structure?
- Is the order of events clear to readers?
- Have you varied sentence openings and combined short sentences to avoid monotony?
- Do your transitions indicate the order of events and signal shifts in time?

Editing a Narrative Essay

When you edit your narrative essay, follow the guidelines on the editing checklists on pages 85, 88, and 90. In addition, focus on the grammar,

mechanics, and punctuation issues that are particularly relevant to narrative essays. One of these issues — avoiding run-on sentences — is discussed below.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT Avoiding Run-ons

When writing narrative essays, particularly personal narratives and essays that include dialogue, writers can easily lose sight of sentence boundaries and create **run-ons**. There are two kinds of run-ons: *fused sentences* and *comma splices*.

A **fused sentence** occurs when two sentences are incorrectly joined without punctuation.

TWO CORRECT SENTENCES:	“The sun came out hot and bright, endlessly, day after day. The crops shriveled and died” (Smith-Yackel 122).
FUSED SENTENCE:	The sun came out hot and bright, endlessly, day after day the crops shriveled and died.

A **comma splice** occurs when two sentences are incorrectly joined with just a comma.

COMMA SPLICE:	The sun came out hot and bright, endlessly, day after day, the crops shriveled and died.
----------------------	--

Five Ways to Correct These Errors

1. Use a period to create two separate sentences.

The sun came out hot and bright, endlessly, day after day. The crops shriveled and died.

2. Join the sentences with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, or, nor, for, so, but, yet*).

The sun came out hot and bright, endlessly, day after day, and the crops shriveled and died.

3. Join the sentences with a semicolon.

The sun came out hot and bright, endlessly, day after day; the crops shriveled and died.

4. Join the sentences with a semicolon and a transitional word or phrase (followed by a comma), such as *however, therefore, or for example*. (See page 57 for a list of transitional words and phrases.)

The sun came out hot and bright, endlessly, day after day; eventually, the crops shriveled and died.

5. Create a complex sentence by adding a subordinating conjunction (*although, because, if, and so on*) or a relative pronoun (*who, which, that, and so on*) to one of the sentences.

As the sun came out hot and bright, endlessly, day after day, the crops shriveled and died.

For more practice in avoiding run-ons, visit the resources for Chapter 6 at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.



EDITING CHECKLIST

Narration

- Have you avoided run-ons?
- Do your verb tenses clearly indicate time relationships between events?
- Have you avoided unnecessary tense shifts?
- If you use dialogue, have you punctuated correctly and capitalized where necessary?

A STUDENT WRITER: Narration

The following essay is typical of the informal narrative writing many students are asked to do in English composition classes. It was written by Tiffany Forte in response to the assignment “Write an informal essay about a goal or dream you had when you were a child.”

My Field of Dreams

Introduction

When I was young, I was told that when I grew up I could 1
be anything I wanted to be, and I always took for granted that
this was true. I knew exactly what I was going to be, and I would
spend hours dreaming about how wonderful my life would be when
I grew up. One day, though, when I did grow up, I realized that
things had not turned out the way I had always expected they
would.

Thesis statement

Narrative begins

When I was little, I never played with baby dolls or Barbies. 2
I wasn't like other little girls; I was a tomboy. I was the only girl
in the neighborhood where I lived, so I always played with boys.
We would play army or football or (my favorite) baseball.

Almost every summer afternoon, all the boys in my 3
neighborhood and I would meet by the big oak tree to get a
baseball game going. Surprisingly, I was always one of the first to
be picked for a team. I was very fast, and (for my size) I could hit
the ball far. I loved baseball more than anything, and I wouldn't
miss a game for the world.

My dad played baseball too, and every Friday night I would 4
go to the field with my mother to watch him play. It was just like
the big leagues, with lots of people, a snack bar, and lights that
shone so high and bright you could see them a mile away. I loved
to go to my dad's games. When all the other kids would wander

off and play, I would sit and cheer on my dad and his team. My attention was focused on the field, and my heart would jump with every pitch.

Even more exciting than my dad's games were the major league games. The Phillies were my favorite team, and I always looked forward to watching them on television. My dad would make popcorn, and we would sit and watch in anticipation of a Phillies victory. We would go wild, yelling and screaming at all the big plays. When the Phillies would win, I would be so excited I couldn't sleep; when they would lose, I would go to bed angry, just like my dad. 5

*Key experience
introduced
(pars. 6–7)*

It was when my dad took me to my first Phillies game that I decided I wanted to be a major league baseball player. The excitement began when we pulled into the parking lot of the old Veterans Stadium. There were thousands of cars. As we walked from the car to the stadium, my dad told me to hold on to his hand and not to let go no matter what. When we gave the man our tickets and entered the stadium, I understood why. There were mobs of people everywhere. They were walking around the stadium and standing in long lines for hot dogs, beer, and souvenirs. It was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen. When we got to our seats, I looked down at the tiny baseball diamond below and felt as if I were on top of the world. 6

The cheering of the crowd, the singing, and the chants were almost more than I could stand. I was bursting with enthusiasm. Then, in the bottom of the eighth inning, with the score tied and two outs, Mike Schmidt came up to bat and hit the game-winning home run. The crowd went crazy. Everyone in the whole stadium was standing, and I found myself yelling and screaming along with everyone else. When Mike Schmidt came out of the dugout to receive his standing ovation, I felt a lump in my throat and butterflies in my stomach. He was everyone's hero that night, and I could only imagine the pride he must have felt. I slept the whole way home and dreamed of what it would be like to be the hero of the game. 7

*Narrative
continues*

The next day, when I met with the boys at the oak tree, I told them that when I grew up, I was going to be a major league baseball player. They all laughed at me and said I could never be a baseball player because I was a girl. I told them that they were all wrong and that I would show them. 8

*Analysis of
childhood
experiences*

In the years to follow, I played girls' softball in a competitive fast-pitch league, and I was very good. I always wanted to play baseball with the boys, but there were no mixed leagues. After a few years, I realized that the boys from the oak tree were right: I was never going to be a major league baseball player. I realized that what I had been told when I was younger wasn't the whole truth. What no one had bothered to tell me was that I could be anything I wanted to be — as long as it was something that was appropriate for a girl to do.

9

Conclusion

In time, I would get over the loss of my dream. I found new dreams, acceptable for a young woman, and I moved on to other things. Still, every time I watch a baseball game and someone hits a home run, I get those same butterflies in my stomach and think, for just a minute, about what might have been.

10

Points for Special Attention

Assignment. Tiffany's assignment was to write about a goal or dream she had when she was a child. As a nontraditional student, a good deal older than most of her classmates, Tiffany found this assignment challenging at first. She wondered if her childhood dreams would be different from those of her classmates, and she was somewhat hesitant to share her drafts with her peer editing group. As it turned out, though, her childhood dreams were not very different from those of the other students in her class.

Introduction. Tiffany's introduction is straightforward, yet it arouses reader interest by setting up a contrast between what she expected and what actually happened. Her optimistic expectation — that she could be anything she wanted to be — is contradicted by her thesis statement, encouraging readers to read on to learn how things turned out and why.

Thesis Statement. Although the assignment called for a personal narrative, the instructor made it clear that the essay should have an explicitly stated thesis that made a point about a childhood goal or dream. Tiffany knew she wanted to write about her passion for baseball, but she also knew that just listing a series of events would not fulfill the assignment. Her thesis statement — "One day, though, when I did grow up, I realized that things had not turned out the way I had always expected they would" — puts her memories in context, suggesting that she will use them to support a general conclusion about the gap between dreams and reality.

Structure. The body of Tiffany's essay traces the chronology of her involvement with baseball — playing with the neighborhood boys, watching her father's games, watching baseball on television, and, finally,

attending her first major league game. Each body paragraph introduces a different aspect of her experience with baseball, culminating in the vividly described Phillies game. The balance of the essay (paragraphs 8–10) summarizes the aftermath of that game, gives a brief overview of Tiffany’s later years in baseball, and presents her conclusion.

Detail. Personal narratives like Tiffany’s need a lot of detail because the writers want readers to see and hear and feel what they did. To present an accurate picture, Tiffany includes all the significant sights and sounds she can remember: the big oak tree, the lights on the field, the popcorn, the excited cheers, the food and souvenir stands, the crowds, and so on. She also names Mike Schmidt (“everyone’s hero”), his team, and the stadium where she saw him play. Despite all these details, though, she omits some important information — for example, how old she was at each stage of her essay.

Working with Sources. Tiffany’s essay is very personal, and she supports her thesis with experiences and observations from her own childhood. Although she could have consulted sources to find specific information about team standings or players’ stats — or even quoted her hero, Mike Schmidt — she decided that her own memories would provide convincing support for her thesis.

Verb Tense. Maintaining clear chronological order is very important in narrative writing, where unwarranted shifts in verb tenses can confuse readers. Knowing this, Tiffany avoids unnecessary tense shifts. In her conclusion, she shifts from past to present tense, but this shift is both necessary and clear. Elsewhere she uses *would* to identify events that recurred regularly. For example, in paragraph 5 she says, “My dad *would* make popcorn” rather than “My dad *made* popcorn,” which would have suggested that he did so only once.

Transitions. Tiffany’s skillful use of transitional words and expressions links her sentences and moves her readers smoothly through her essay. In addition to transitional words such as *when* and *then*, she uses specific time markers — “When I was little,” “Almost every summer afternoon,” “every Friday night,” “As we walked,” “The next day,” “In the years to follow,” and “After a few years” — to advance the narrative and carry her readers along.

Focus on Revision

In their responses to an earlier draft of Tiffany’s essay, several students in her peer editing group recommended that she revise one particularly monotonous paragraph. (As one student pointed out, all its sentences began with the subject, making the paragraph seem choppy and its ideas disconnected.) Here is the paragraph from her draft:

My dad played baseball too. I went to the field with my mother every Friday night to watch him play. It was just like the big leagues. There were lots of people and a snack bar. The lights shone so high and bright you could see them a mile away. I loved to go to my dad's games. All the other kids would wander off and play. I would sit and cheer on my dad and his team. My attention was focused on the field. My heart would jump with every pitch.

In the revised version of the paragraph (now paragraph 4 of her essay), Tiffany varies sentence length and opening strategies:

My dad played baseball too, and every Friday night I would go to the field with my mother to watch him play. It was just like the big leagues, with lots of people, a snack bar, and lights that shone so high and bright you could see them a mile away. I loved to go to my dad's games. When all the other kids would wander off and play, I would sit and cheer on my dad and his team. My attention was focused on the field, and my heart would jump with every pitch.

After reading Tiffany's revised draft, another student suggested that she might still polish her essay a bit. For instance, she could add some dialogue, quoting the boys' taunts and her own reply in paragraph 8. She could also revise to eliminate **clichés** (overused expressions), substituting fresher, more original language for phrases such as "I felt a lump in my throat and butterflies in my stomach" and "felt as if I were on top of the world." In the next draft of her essay, Tiffany followed up on these suggestions.



PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: Narration

1. What point is the writer making about the essay's subject? Is this point explicitly stated in a thesis statement? If so, where? If not, can you state the essay's thesis in one sentence?
2. List some details that enrich the narrative. Where could more detail be added? What kind of detail? Be specific.
3. Does the writer vary sentence structure and avoid monotonous strings of similar sentences? Should any sentences be combined? If so, which ones? Can you suggest different openings for any sentences?
4. Should any transitions be added to clarify the order in which events occurred? If so, where?
5. Do verb tenses establish a clear chronological order? Identify any verb tenses that you believe need to be changed.
6. Does the writer avoid run-on sentences? Point out any fused sentences or comma splices.
7. What could the writer *add* to this essay?
8. What could the writer take out of this essay?

(continued)

9. What is the essay's greatest strength? Why?
10. What is the essay's greatest weakness? What steps should the writer take to correct this problem?

The selections that follow illustrate some of the many possibilities open to writers of narratives. The first selection, a visual text, is followed by questions designed to illustrate how narration can operate in visual form.

SANDRA CISNEROS

Only Daughter

Born into a working-class family in 1954, Sandra Cisneros, the daughter of a Mexican-American mother and a Mexican father, spent much of her childhood shuttling between Chicago and Mexico City. A lonely, bookish child, Cisneros began writing privately at a young age but only began to find her voice when she was a creative-writing student at Loyola University and later at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her best-known works are the novel *The House on Mango Street* (1983) and the short-story collection *Woman Hollering Creek* (1991); she has also published several collections of poetry. Cisneros's latest novel, *Caramelo*, appeared in 2002.

Background on gender preference In the following essay, which originally appeared in *Glamour* magazine in 1990, Cisneros describes the difficulties of growing up as the only daughter in a Mexican-American family of six sons. Historically, sons have been valued over daughters in most cultures, as reflected in the following proverbs: "A house full of daughters is like a cellar full of sour beer" (Dutch); "Daughters pay nae [no] debts" (Scottish); "A stupid son is better than a crafty daughter" (Chinese); and "A virtuous son is the sun of his family" (Sanskrit). This was largely the case because limited employment opportunities for women meant that sons were more likely to be able to provide financial support for aging parents. Contemporary research suggests that while the preference for male children has diminished considerably in industrialized nations, a distinct preference for sons continues among many cultures in Asia and the Middle East, raising concerns among medical ethicists worldwide. And, even within the more traditional cultures of the industrialized world, old habits of mind regarding the role of women in society can die hard, as the attitudes of Cisneros's father suggest.

Once, several years ago, when I was just starting out my writing career, 1
I was asked to write my own contributor's note for an anthology I was part
of. I wrote: "I am the only daughter in a family of six sons. *That* explains
everything."

Well, I've thought about that ever since, and yes, it explains a lot to me, 2
but for the reader's sake I should have written: "I am the only daughter in a
Mexican family of six sons." Or even: "I am the only daughter of a Mexican
father and a Mexican-American mother." Or: "I am the only daughter of a
working-class family of nine." All of these had everything to do with who
I am today.

I was/am the only daughter and *only* a daughter. Being an only daugh- 3
ter in a family of six sons forced me by circumstance to spend a lot of
time by myself because my brothers felt it beneath them to play with a
girl in public. But that aloneness, that loneliness, was good for a would-be

writer — it allowed me time to think and think, to imagine, to read and prepare myself.

Being only a daughter for my father meant my destiny would lead me to become someone's wife. That's what he believed. But when I was in the fifth grade and shared my plans for college with him, I was sure he understood. I remember my father saying, "*Que bueno, mi'ja*, that's good." That meant a lot to me, especially since my brothers thought the idea hilarious. What I didn't realize was that my father thought college was good for girls — good for finding a husband. After four years in college and two more in graduate school, and still no husband, my father shakes his head even now and says I wasted all that education.

In retrospect, I'm lucky my father believed daughters were meant for husbands. It meant it didn't matter if I majored in something silly like English. After all, I'd find a nice professional eventually, right? This allowed me the liberty to putter about embroidering my little poems and stories without my father interrupting with so much as a "What's that you're writing?"

But the truth is, I wanted him to interrupt. I wanted my father to understand what it was I was scribbling, to introduce me as "My only daughter, the writer." Not as "This is only my daughter. She teaches." *Es maestra* — teacher. Not even *profesora*.

In a sense, everything I have ever written has been for him, to win his approval even though I know my father can't read English words, even though my father's only reading includes the brown-ink *Esto* sports magazines from Mexico City and the bloody *¡Alarma!* magazines that feature yet another sighting of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* on a tortilla or a wife's revenge on her philandering husband by bashing his skull in with a *molcajete* (a kitchen mortar made of volcanic rock). Or the *fotonovelas*, the little picture paperbacks with tragedy and trauma erupting from the characters' mouths in bubbles.

My father represents, then, the public majority. A public who is uninterested in reading, and yet one whom I am writing about and for, and privately trying to woo.

When we were growing up in Chicago, we moved a lot because of my father. He suffered bouts of nostalgia. Then we'd have to let go of our flat, store the furniture with mother's relatives, load the station wagon with baggage and bologna sandwiches, and head south. To Mexico City.

We came back, of course. To yet another Chicago flat, another Chicago neighborhood, another Catholic school. Each time, my father would seek out the parish priest in order to get a tuition break, and complain or boast: "I have seven sons."

He meant *siete hijos*, seven children, but he translated it as "sons." "I have seven sons." To anyone who would listen. The Sears Roebuck employee who sold us the washing machine. The short-order cook where my father ate his ham-and-eggs breakfasts. "I have seven sons." As if he deserved a medal from the state.

My papa. He didn't mean anything by that mistranslation, I'm sure. 12
But somehow I could feel myself being erased. I'd tug my father's sleeve and
whisper: "Not seven sons. Six! and *one daughter*."

When my oldest brother graduated from medical school, he fulfilled 13
my father's dream that we study hard and use this — our heads, instead
of this — our hands. Even now my father's hands are thick and yellow,
stubbled by a history of hammer and nails and twine and coils and springs.
"Use this," my father said, tapping his head, "and not this," showing us
those hands. He always looked tired when he said it.

Wasn't college an investment? And hadn't I spent all those years in 14
college? And if I didn't marry, what was it all for? Why would anyone go to
college and then choose to be poor? Especially someone who had always
been poor.

Last year, after ten years of writing professionally, the financial rewards 15
started to trickle in. My second National Endowment for the Arts Fellow-
ship. A guest professorship at the University of California, Berkeley. My
book, which sold to a major New York publishing house.

At Christmas, I flew home to Chicago. The house was throbbing, same 16
as always; hot *tamales* and sweet *tamales* hissing in my mother's pressure
cooker, and everybody — my mother, six brothers, wives, babies, aunts,
cousins — talking too loud and at the same time, like in a Fellini film, be-
cause that's just how we are.

I went upstairs to my father's room. One of my stories had just been 17
translated into Spanish and published in an anthology of Chicano writ-
ing, and I wanted to show it to him. Ever since he recovered from a stroke
two years ago, my father likes to spend his leisure hours horizontally. And
that's how I found him, watching a Pedro Infante* movie on Galavisión**
and eating rice pudding.

There was a glass filmed with milk on the bedside table. There were 18
several vials of pills and balled Kleenex. And on the floor, one black sock
and a plastic urinal that I didn't want to look at but looked at anyway.
Pedro Infante was about to burst into song, and my father was laughing.

I'm not sure if it was because my story was translated into Spanish, or 19
because it was published in Mexico, or perhaps because the story dealt with
Tepeyac, the *colonia* my father was raised in and the house he grew up in,
but at any rate, my father punched the mute button on his remote control
and read my story.

I sat on the bed next to my father and waited. He read it very slowly. As 20
if he were reading each line over and over. He laughed at all the right places
and read lines he liked out loud. He pointed and asked questions: "Is this
So-and-so?" "Yes," I said. He kept reading.

* Eds. note — Mexican actor.

** Eds. note — A Spanish-language cable channel.

When he was finally finished, after what seemed like hours, my father 21
looked up and asked: “Where can we get more copies of this for the relatives?”

Of all the wonderful things that happened to me last year, that was the 22
most wonderful.

• • •

Comprehension

1. What does Cisneros mean when she writes that being an only daughter in a family of six sons “explains everything” (1)?
2. What distinction does Cisneros make in paragraphs 2 and 3 between being “the only daughter” and being “*only* a daughter”?
3. What advantages does Cisneros see in being “the only daughter”? In being “*only* a daughter”?
4. Why does her father think she has wasted her education? What is her reaction to his opinion?
5. Why is her father’s reaction to her story the “most wonderful” (22) thing that happened to Cisneros that year?

Purpose and Audience

1. Although Cisneros uses many Spanish words in her essay, in most cases she defines or explains these words. What does this decision tell you about her purpose and her audience?
2. What is Cisneros’s thesis? What incidents and details support this thesis?
3. Do you think Cisneros intends to convey a sympathetic or an unsympathetic impression of her father? Explain.

Style and Structure

1. Where does Cisneros interrupt a narrative passage to comment on or analyze events? What does this strategy accomplish?
2. Are the episodes in this essay presented in chronological order? Explain.
3. What transitional expressions does Cisneros use to introduce new episodes?
4. Cisneros quotes her father several times. What do we learn about him from his words?
5. Why does Cisneros devote so much space to describing her father in paragraphs 17–21? How does this portrait compare to the one she presents in paragraphs 9–11?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.
embroidering (5) stubbed (13)

2. What is the difference in **connotation** between *sons* and *children*? Between *teacher* and *professor*? Do you think these distinctions are as significant as Cisneros seems to think they are? Explain.

Journal Entry

Recount an incident that illustrates how the number and gender(s) of your siblings “explain[s] everything” about who you are today.

Writing Workshop

1. Write a narrative essay consisting of a series of related episodes that show how you gradually gained the approval and respect of one of your parents, of another relative, or of a friend.
2. **Working with Sources.** In “Only Daughter,” Cisneros traces the development of her identity as an adult, as a female, and as a writer. Write a narrative essay tracing the development of your own personal or professional identity. Refer in your essay to “Only Daughter,” quoting relevant ideas if possible to help explain your own personal development. Be sure you document all quotations you use, and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
3. Are male and female children treated differently in your family? Have your parents had different expectations for their sons and daughters? Write a narrative essay recounting one or more incidents that illustrate these differences (or the lack of differences). If you and your siblings are all the same gender, or if you are an only child, write about another family you know well.

Combining the Patterns

Cisneros structures her essay as a narrative in which she is the main character and her brothers barely appear. To give her readers a clearer understanding of how her father’s attitude toward her differs from his attitude toward her brothers, Cisneros could have added one or more paragraphs of **comparison and contrast**, focusing on the different ways she and her brothers are treated. What specific points of contrast do you think readers would find most useful? Where might such paragraphs be added?

Thematic Connections

- “My Field of Dreams” (page 103)
- “Rice” (page 172)
- “Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior” (page 410)
- Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848 (page 559)

BONNIE SMITH-YACKEL

My Mother Never Worked

Bonnie Smith-Yackel was born into a farm family in Willmar, Minnesota, in 1937. She began writing as a young homemaker in the early 1960s and for the next fourteen years published short stories, essays, and book reviews in such publications as *Catholic Digest*, *Minnesota Monthly*, and *Ms.* magazine, as well as in several local newspapers. As Smith-Yackel explains it, “The catalyst for writing the [following] essay shortly after my mother’s death was recounting my telephone conversation with Social Security to the lawyer who was helping me settle my mother’s estate. When I told him what the SS woman had said, he responded: ‘Well, that’s right. Your mother didn’t work, you know.’ At which point I stood and said, ‘She worked harder throughout her life than you or a hundred men like you!’ and stomped out of his office, drove home, sat down and wrote the essay in one sitting.” Although this narrative essay, first published in *Women: A Journal of Liberation* in 1975, is based on personal experience, it also makes a broader statement about how society values “women’s work.”

Background on Social Security benefits Social Security is a federal insurance program that requires workers to contribute a percentage of their wages to a fund that they may draw benefits from if they become unemployed due to disability. After retirement, workers can receive a monthly income from this fund, which also provides a modest death benefit to survivors. The contribution is generally deducted directly from a worker’s paycheck, and employers must contribute a matching amount. According to federal law, a woman who is a homemaker, who has never been a wage earner, is eligible for Social Security benefits only through the earnings of her deceased husband. (The same would be true for a man if the roles were reversed.) Therefore, a homemaker’s survivors would not be eligible for the death benefit. Although the law has been challenged in the courts, the survivors of a homemaker who has never been a wage earner are still not entitled to a Social Security death benefit.

“Social Security Office.” (The voice answering the telephone sounds 1
very self-assured.)
“I’m calling about . . . my mother just died . . . I was told to call you 2
and see about a . . . death-benefit check, I think they call it. . . .”
“I see. Was your mother on Social Security? How old was she?” 3
“Yes . . . she was seventy-eight. . . .” 4
“Do you know her number?” 5
“No . . . I, ah . . . don’t you have a record?” 6
“Certainly. I’ll look it up. Her name?” 7
“Smith. Martha Smith. Or maybe she used Martha Ruth 8
Smith? . . . Sometimes she used her maiden name . . . Martha Jerabek
Smith?”

"If you'd care to hold on, I'll check our records — it'll be a few minutes." 9
 "Yes. . . ." 10

Her love letters — to and from Daddy — were in an old box, tied with 11
 ribbons and stiff, rigid-with-age leather thongs: 1918 through 1920; hers
 written on stationery from the general store she had worked in full-time
 and managed, single-handed, after her graduation from high school in
 1913; and his, at first, on YMCA or Soldiers and Sailors Club stationery
 dispensed to the fighting men of World War I. He wooed her thoroughly
 and persistently by mail, and though she reciprocated all his feelings for
 her, she dreaded marriage. . . .

"It's so hard for me to decide when to have my wedding day — that's all 12
 I've thought about these last two days. I have told you dozens of times that
 I won't be afraid of married life, but when it comes down to setting the date
 and then picturing myself a married woman with half a dozen or more kids
 to look after, it just makes me sick. . . . I am weeping right now — I hope
 that some day I can look back and say how foolish I was to dread it all."

They married in February, 1921, and began farming. Their first baby, 13
 a daughter, was born in January, 1922, when my mother was twenty-six
 years old. The second baby, a son, was born in March, 1923. They were
 renting farms; my father, besides working his own fields, also was a hired
 man for two other farmers. They had no capital initially, and had to gain
 it slowly, working from dawn until midnight every day. My town-bred
 mother learned to set hens and raise chickens, feed pigs, milk cows, plant
 and harvest a garden, and can every fruit and vegetable she could scrounge.
 She carried water nearly a quarter of a mile from the well to fill her wash
 boilers in order to do her laundry on a scrub board. She learned to shuck
 grain, feed threshers, shock and husk corn, feed corn pickers. In September,
 1925, the third baby came, and in June, 1927, the fourth child — both
 daughters. In 1930, my parents had enough money to buy their own farm,
 and that March they moved all their livestock and belongings themselves,
 fifty-five miles over rutted, muddy roads.

In the summer of 1930 my mother and her two eldest children re- 14
 claimed a forty-acre field from Canadian thistles, by chopping them all out
 with a hoe. In the other fields, when the oats and flax began to head out,
 the green and blue of the crops were hidden by the bright yellow of wild
 mustard. My mother walked the fields day after day, pulling each mus-
 tard plant. She raised a new flock of baby chicks — five hundred — and she
 spaded up, planted, hoed, and harvested a half-acre garden.

During the next spring their hogs caught cholera and died. No cash 15
 that fall.

And in the next year the drought hit. My mother and father trudged 16
 from the well to the chickens, the well to the calf pasture, the well to the
 barn, and from the well to the garden. The sun came out hot and bright,
 endlessly, day after day. The crops shriveled and died. They harvested half
 the corn, and ground the other half, stalks and all, and fed it to the cattle
 as fodder. With the price at four cents a bushel for the harvested crop, they

couldn't afford to haul it into town. They burned it in the furnace for fuel that winter.

In 1934, in February, when the dust was still so thick in the Minnesota 17
air that my parents couldn't always see from the house to the barn, their fifth child — a fourth daughter — was born. My father hunted rabbits daily, and my mother stewed them, fried them, canned them, and wished out loud that she could taste hamburger once more. In the fall the shotgun brought prairie chickens, ducks, pheasant, and grouse. My mother plucked each bird, carefully reserving the breast feathers for pillows.

In the winter she sewed night after night, endlessly, begging cast-off 18
clothing from relatives, ripping apart coats, dresses, blouses, and trousers to remake them to fit her four daughters and son. Every morning and every evening she milked cows, fed pigs and calves, cared for chickens, picked eggs, cooked meals, washed dishes, scrubbed floors, and tended and loved her children. In the spring she planted a garden once more, dragging pails of water to nourish and sustain the vegetables for the family. In 1936 she lost a baby in her sixth month.

In 1937 her fifth daughter was born. She was forty-two years old. In 19
1939 a second son, and in 1941 her eighth child — and third son.

But the war had come, and prosperity of a sort. The herd of cattle had 20
grown to thirty head; she still milked morning and evening. Her garden was more than a half acre — the rains had come, and by now the Rural Electricity Administration and indoor plumbing. Still she sewed — dresses and jackets for the children, housedresses and aprons for herself, weekly patching of jeans, overalls, and denim shirts. She still made pillows, using feathers she had plucked, and quilts every year — intricate patterns as well as patchwork, stitched as well as tied — all necessary bedding for her family. Every scrap of cloth too small to be used in quilts was carefully saved and painstakingly sewed together in strips to make rugs. She still went out in the fields to help with the haying whenever there was a threat of rain.

In 1959 my mother's last child graduated from high school. A year 21
later the cows were sold. She still raised chickens and ducks, plucked feathers, made pillows, baked her own bread, and every year made a new quilt — now for a married child or for a grandchild. And her garden, that huge, undying symbol of sustenance, was as large and cared for as in all the years before. The canning, and now freezing, continued.

In 1969, on a June afternoon, mother and father started out for town 22
so that she could buy sugar to make rhubarb jam for a daughter who lived in Texas. The car crashed into a ditch. She was paralyzed from the waist down.

In 1970 her husband, my father, died. My mother struggled to regain 23
some competence and dignity and order in her life. At the rehabilitation institute, where they gave her physical therapy and trained her to live usefully in a wheelchair, the therapist told me: "She did fifteen pushups today — fifteen! She's almost seventy-five years old! I've never known a woman so strong!"

From her wheelchair she canned pickles, baked bread, ironed clothes, wrote dozens of letters weekly to her friends and her “half dozen or more kids,” and made three patchwork housecoats and one quilt. She made balls and balls of carpet rags — enough for five rugs. And kept all her love letters.	24
“I think I’ve found your mother’s records — Martha Ruth Smith; married to Ben F. Smith?”	25
“Yes, that’s right.”	26
“Well, I see that she was getting a widow’s pension. . . .”	27
“Yes, that’s right.”	28
“Well, your mother isn’t entitled to our \$255 death benefit.”	29
“Not entitled! But why?”	30
The voice on the telephone explains patiently:	31
“Well, you see — your mother never worked.”	32
. . .	

Comprehension

1. What kind of work did Martha Smith do while her children were growing up? List some of the chores she performed.
2. Why aren’t Martha Smith’s survivors entitled to a death benefit when their mother dies?
3. How does the government define *work*?

Purpose and Audience

1. What point is the writer trying to make? Why do you suppose her thesis is never explicitly stated?
2. This essay appeared in *Ms.* magazine and other publications whose audiences are sympathetic to feminist goals. Could it have appeared in a magazine whose audience had a more traditional view of gender roles? Explain.
3. Smith-Yackel mentions relatively little about her father in this essay. How can you account for this?
4. This essay was first published in 1975. Do you think it is dated, or do you think the issues it raises are still relevant today?

Style and Structure

1. Is the essay’s title effective? If so, why? If not, what alternate title can you suggest?
2. Smith-Yackel could have outlined her mother’s life without framing it with the telephone conversation. Why do you think she includes this frame?
3. What strategies does Smith-Yackel use to indicate the passing of time in her narrative?

4. This narrative piles details one on top of another almost like a list. Why does the writer include so many details?
5. In paragraphs 20 and 21, what is accomplished by the repetition of the word *still*?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

scrounge (13)	ruttet (13)	intricate (20)
shuck (13)	reclaimed (14)	sustenance (21)
shock (13)	flax (14)	
husk (13)	fodder (16)	

2. Try substituting equivalent words for those italicized in this sentence:

He *wooed* her *thoroughly* and *persistently* by mail, and though she *reciprocated* all his feelings for her, she *dreaded* marriage . . . (11).

How do your substitutions change the sentence's meaning?

3. Throughout her narrative, Smith-Yackel uses concrete, specific verbs. Review her choice of verbs, particularly in paragraphs 13–24, and comment on how such verbs serve the essay's purpose.

Journal Entry

Do you believe that a homemaker who has never been a wage earner should be entitled to a Social Security death benefit for her survivors? Explain your reasoning.

Writing Workshop

1. If you can, interview one of your parents or grandparents (or another person you know who reminds you of Smith-Yackel's mother) about his or her work history, and write a chronological narrative based on what you learn. Include a thesis statement that your narrative can support, and quote your family member's responses when possible.
2. Write Martha Smith's obituary as it might have appeared in her hometown newspaper. (If you are not familiar with the form of an obituary, read a few in your local paper or online at Legacy.com or Obituaries.com.)
3. Write a narrative account of a typical day at the worst job you ever had. Include a thesis statement that expresses your negative feelings.

Combining the Patterns

Because of the repetitive nature of the farm chores Smith-Yackel describes in her narrative, some passages come very close to explaining a **process**, a series of repeated steps that always occur in a predictable order. Identify several

such passages. If Smith-Yackel's essay were written entirely as a process explanation, what material would have to be left out? How would these omissions change the essay?

Thematic Connections

- "Midnight" (page 221)
- "Girl" (page 258)
- "Aristotle" (page 484)
- "I Want a Wife" (page 503)

Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police

Martin Gansberg (1920–1995), a native of Brooklyn, New York, was a reporter and editor for the *New York Times* for forty-three years. The following article, written for the *Times* two weeks after the 1964 murder it recounts, earned Gansberg an award for excellence from the Newspaper Reporters Association of New York. Gansberg's thesis, though not explicitly stated, still retains its power.

Background on the Kitty Genovese murder case The events reported here took place on March 14, 1964, as contemporary American culture was undergoing a complex transition. The relatively placid years of the 1950s were giving way to more troubling times: the civil rights movement was leading to social unrest in the South and in northern inner cities; the escalating war in Vietnam was creating angry political divisions; President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated just four months earlier; violent imagery was increasing in television and film; crime rates were rising; and a growing drug culture was becoming apparent. The brutal, senseless murder of Kitty Genovese — and, more important, her neighbors' failure to respond immediately to her cries for help — became a nationwide, and even worldwide, symbol for what was perceived as an evolving culture of violence and indifference.

Recently, some of the details Gansberg mentions have been challenged. For example, as the *New York Times* now acknowledges, there were only two attacks on Ms. Genovese, not three; the first attack may have been shorter than first reported; the second attack may have occurred in the apartment house foyer, where neighbors would not have been able to see Genovese; and some witnesses may, in fact, actually *have* called the police. At the time, however, the world was shocked by the incident, and even today social scientists around the world debate the causes of “the Genovese syndrome.”

For more than half an hour thirty-eight respectable, law-abiding citizens in Queens watched a killer stalk and stab a woman in three separate attacks in Kew Gardens.

Twice their chatter and the sudden glow of their bedroom lights interrupted him and frightened him off. Each time he returned, sought her out, and stabbed her again. Not one person telephoned the police during the assault; one witness called after the woman was dead.

That was two weeks ago today.

“Not one person telephoned the police during the assault; one witness called after the woman was dead.”

1

2

3

Still shocked is Assistant Chief Inspector Frederick M. Lussen, in 4
charge of the borough's detectives and a veteran of twenty-five years of
homicide investigations. He can give a matter-of-fact recitation on many
murders. But the Kew Gardens slaying baffles him — not because it is a
murder, but because the “good people” failed to call the police.

“As we have reconstructed the crime,” he said, “the assailant had three 5
chances to kill this woman during a thirty-five-minute period. He returned
twice to complete the job. If we had been called when he first attacked, the
woman might not be dead now.”

This is what the police say happened beginning at 3:20 A.M. in the staid, 6
middle-class, tree-lined Austin Street area:

Twenty-eight-year-old Catherine Genovese, who was called Kitty by al- 7
most everyone in the neighborhood, was returning home from her job as
manager of a bar in Hollis. She parked her red Fiat in a lot adjacent to the
Kew Gardens Long Island Rail Road Station, facing Mowbray Place. Like
many residents of the neighborhood, she had parked there day after day
since her arrival from Connecticut a year ago, although the railroad frowns
on the practice.

She turned off the lights of her car, locked the door, and started to 8
walk the one hundred feet to the entrance of her apartment at 82-70 Austin
Street, which is in a Tudor building, with stores in the first floor and apart-
ments on the second.

The entrance to the apartment is in the rear of the building because the 9
front is rented to retail stores. At night the quiet neighborhood is shrouded
in the slumbering darkness that marks most residential areas.

Miss Genovese noticed a man at the far end of the lot, near a seven- 10
story apartment house at 82-40 Austin Street. She halted. Then, nervously,
she headed up Austin Street toward Lefferts Boulevard, where there is a call
box to the 102nd Police Precinct in nearby Richmond Hill.

She got as far as a street light in front of a bookstore before the man 11
grabbed her. She screamed. Lights went on in the ten-story apartment
house at 82-67 Austin Street, which faces the bookstore. Windows slid
open and voices punctuated the early-morning stillness.

Miss Genovese screamed: “Oh, my God, he stabbed me! Please help 12
me! Please help me!”

From one of the upper windows in the apartment house, a man called 13
down: “Let that girl alone!”

The assailant looked up at him, shrugged, and walked down Austin 14
Street toward a white sedan parked a short distance away. Miss Genovese
struggled to her feet.

Lights went out. The killer returned to Miss Genovese, now trying to 15
make her way around the side of the building by the parking lot to get to
her apartment. The assailant stabbed her again.

“I’m dying!” she shrieked. “I’m dying!” 16

Windows were opened again, and lights went on in many apartments. 17
The assailant got into his car and drove away. Miss Genovese staggered

to her feet. A city bus, 0-10, the Lefferts Boulevard line to Kennedy International Airport, passed. It was 3:35 A.M.

The assailant returned. By then, Miss Genovese had crawled to the back of the building, where the freshly painted brown doors to the apartment house held out hope for safety. The killer tried the first door; she wasn't there. At the second door, 82-62 Austin Street, he saw her slumped on the floor at the foot of the stairs. He stabbed her a third time — fatally.

It was 3:50 by the time the police received their first call, from a man who was a neighbor of Miss Genovese. In two minutes they were at the scene. The neighbor, a seventy-year-old woman, and another woman were the only persons on the street. Nobody else came forward.

The man explained that he had called the police after much deliberation. He had phoned a friend in Nassau County for advice, and then he had crossed the roof of the building to the apartment of the elderly woman to get her to make the call.

"I didn't want to get involved," he sheepishly told police.

Six days later, the police arrested Winston Moseley, a twenty-nine-year-old business machine operator, and charged him with homicide. Moseley had no previous record. He is married, has two children, and owns a home at 133-19 Sutter Avenue, South Ozone Park, Queens. On Wednesday, a court committed him to Kings County Hospital for psychiatric observation.

When questioned by the police, Moseley also said that he had slain Mrs. Annie May Johnson, twenty-four, of 146-12 133d Avenue, Jamaica, on Feb. 29 and Barbara Kralik, fifteen, of 174-17 140th Avenue, Springfield Gardens, last July. In the Kralik case, the police are holding Alvin L. Mitchell, who is said to have confessed to that slaying.

The police stressed how simple it would have been to have gotten in touch with them. "A phone call," said one of the detectives, "would have done it." The police may be reached by dialing "0" for operator or SPring 7-3100.

Today witnesses from the neighborhood, which is made up of one-family homes in the \$35,000 to \$60,000 range with the exception of the two apartment houses near the railroad station, find it difficult to explain why they didn't call the police.

A housewife, knowingly if quite casually, said, "We thought it was a lovers' quarrel." A husband and wife both said, "Frankly, we were afraid." They seemed aware of the fact that events might have been different. A distraught woman, wiping her hands in her apron, said, "I didn't want my husband to get involved."

One couple, now willing to talk about that night, said they heard the first screams. The husband looked thoughtfully at the bookstore where the killer first grabbed Miss Genovese.

"We went to the window to see what was happening," he said, "but the light from our bedroom made it difficult to see the street." The wife, still apprehensive, added: "I put out the light and we were able to see better."

Asked why they hadn't called the police, she shrugged and replied: "I 29
don't know."

A man peeked out from a slight opening in the doorway to his apart- 30
ment and rattled off an account of the killer's second attack. Why hadn't
he called the police at the time? "I was tired," he said without emotion. "I
went back to bed."

It was 4:25 A.M. when the ambulance arrived to take the body of Miss 31
Genovese. It drove off. "Then," a solemn police detective said, "the people
came out."

. . .

Comprehension

1. According to Gansberg, how much time elapsed between the first stabbing of Kitty Genovese and the time when the people finally came out?
2. What excuses do the neighbors make for not coming to Kitty Genovese's aid?

Purpose and Audience

1. This article appeared in 1964. What effect was it intended to have on its audience? Do you think it has the same impact today, or has its impact changed or diminished?
2. What is the article's main point? Why does Gansberg imply his thesis rather than state it explicitly?
3. What is Gansberg's purpose in describing the Austin Street area as "staid, middle-class, tree-lined" (6)?
4. Why do you suppose Gansberg provides the police department's phone number in his article? (Note that New York City did not have 911 emergency service in 1964.)

Style and Structure

1. Gansberg is very precise in this article, especially in his references to time, addresses, and ages. Why?
2. The objective newspaper style is dominant in this article, but the writer's anger shows through. Point to words and phrases that reveal his attitude toward his material.
3. Because this article was originally set in the narrow columns of a newspaper, it has many short paragraphs. Would the narrative be more effective if some of these brief paragraphs were combined? If so, why? If not, why not? Give examples to support your answer.
4. Review the dialogue. Does it strengthen Gansberg's narrative? Would the article be more compelling with additional dialogue? Without dialogue? Explain.

5. This article does not have a formal conclusion; nevertheless, the last paragraph sums up the writer's attitude. How?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

stalk (1)	adjacent (7)	distraught (26)
baffles (4)	punctuated (11)	apprehensive (28)
staid (6)	sheepishly (21)	
2. The word *assailant* appears frequently in this article. Why is it used so often? What impact is this repetition likely to have on readers? What other words could have been used?

Journal Entry

In a similar situation, would you have called the police? Would you have gone outside to help? What factors do you think might have influenced your decision?

Writing Workshop

1. In your own words, write a ten-sentence **summary** (see page 712) of the article. Try to reflect Gansberg's order and emphasis, as well as his ideas, and be sure to include all necessary transitions.
2. Rewrite the article as if it were a blog post by one of the thirty-eight people who watched the murder. Summarize what you saw, and explain why you decided not to call for help. (You may invent details that Gansberg does not include.) If you like, you can first visit the Web site oldkewgardens.com, which includes a detailed critique of Gansberg's article as well as photos of the area in which the crime took place.
3. **Working with Sources.** If you have ever been involved in or witnessed a situation in which someone was in trouble, write a narrative essay about the incident. If people failed to help the person in trouble, explain why you think no one acted. If people did act, tell how. Be sure to account for your own actions. In your essay's introduction, refer to Gansberg's account of Kitty Genovese's murder. If you quote Gansberg, be sure to include documentation and a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)

Combining the Patterns

Because the purpose of this newspaper article is to give basic factual information, it has no extended descriptions of the victim, the witnesses, or the crime scene. It also does not explain *why* those who watched did not act. Where might passages of **description** or **cause and effect** be added? How might

such additions change the article's impact on readers? Do you think they would strengthen the article?

Thematic Connections

- "Shooting an Elephant" (page 133)
- "The Lottery" (page 311)
- "Who Killed Benny Paret?" (page 339)
- "A Peaceful Woman Explains Why She Carries a Gun" (page 354)

Description

What Is Description?

You use **description** to tell readers about the physical characteristics of a person, place, or thing. Description relies on the five senses — sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. In the following paragraph from “Knoxville: Summer 1915,” James Agee uses sight, touch, and sound to re-create a summer’s evening for his audience.

Topic sentence

Description using sight

Description using touch

Description using sound

It is not of games children play in the evening that I want to speak now, it is of a contemporaneous atmosphere that has little to do with them; that of fathers and families, each in his space of lawn, his shirt fishlike pale in the unnatural light and his face nearly anonymous, hosing their lawns. The hoses were attached to spigots that stood out of the brick foundations of the houses. The nozzles were variously set but usually so there was a long sweet stream of spray, the nozzle wet in the hand, the water trickling the right forearm and the peeled-back cuff, and the water whishing out a long loose and low-curved cone, and so gentle a sound. First an insane noise of violence in the nozzle, then the still irregular sound of adjustment, then the smoothing into steadiness and a pitch as accurately tuned to the size and style of stream as any violin. So many qualities of sound out of one hose: so many choral differences out of those several hoses that were in earshot. Out of any one hose, the almost dead silence of the release, and the short still arch of the separate big drops, silent as a held breath, and the only noise the flattering noise on leaves and the slapped grass at the fall of each big drop. That, and the intense hiss with the intense stream; that, and the same intensity not growing less but growing more quiet and delicate with the turn of the nozzle,

up to that extreme tender whisper when the water was just a wide bell of film.

A descriptive essay tells what something looks like or what it feels like, sounds like, smells like, or tastes like. However, description often goes beyond personal sense impressions: novelists can create imaginary landscapes, historians can paint word pictures of historical figures, and scientists can describe physical phenomena they have never actually seen. When you write description, you use language to create a vivid impression for your readers.

Using Description

In your college writing, you use description in many different kinds of assignments. In a comparison-and-contrast essay, for example, you may describe the designs of two proposed buildings to show that one is more desirable than the other. In an argumentative essay, you may describe a fish kill in a local river to make the point that industrial waste dumping is a problem. Through description, you communicate your view of the world to your readers. If your readers come to understand or share your view, they are more likely to accept your observations, your judgments, and, eventually, your conclusions. Therefore, in almost every essay you write, knowing how to write effective description is important.

Understanding Objective Description

Description can be objective or subjective. In an **objective description**, you focus on the object itself rather than on your personal reactions to it. Your purpose is to present a precise, literal picture of your subject. Many writing situations require exact descriptions of apparatus or conditions, and in these cases your goal is to construct an accurate picture for your audience. A biologist describing what he sees through a microscope and a historian describing a Civil War battlefield would both write objectively. The biologist would not, for instance, say how exciting his observations were, nor would the historian say how disappointed she was at the outcome of the battle. Many newspaper reporters also try to achieve this objectivity, as do writers of technical reports, scientific papers, and certain types of business correspondence. Still, objectivity is an ideal that writers strive for but never fully achieve. In fact, in selecting some details and leaving out others, writers are making subjective decisions.

In the following descriptive passage, Shakespearean scholar Thomas Marc Parrott aims for objectivity by giving his readers the factual information they need to visualize Shakespeare's theater:

The main or outer stage [of Shakespeare's theater] was a large platform, which projected out into the audience. Sections of the floor could be

removed to make such things as the grave in the grave digger's scene in *Hamlet*, or they could be transformed into trapdoors through which characters could disappear, as in *The Tempest*. The players referred to the space beneath the platform as the Hell. At the rear of the platform and at the same level was the smaller, inner stage, or alcove. . . . Above the alcove at the level of the second story, there was another curtained stage, the chamber. . . . The action of the play would move from one scene to another, using one, two, or all of them. Above the chamber was the music gallery; . . . and above this were the windows, "The Huts," where characters and lookouts could appear.



Artist's rendering of the Globe Theatre, London.

Note that Parrott is not interested in responding to or evaluating the theater he describes. Instead, he chooses words that convey sizes and directions, such as *large* and *above*.

Objective descriptions are sometimes accompanied by **visuals**, such as diagrams, drawings, or photographs. A well-chosen visual can enhance a description by enabling writers to avoid tedious passages of description that might confuse readers. To be effective, a visual should clearly illustrate what is being discussed and not introduce new material.

The illustration on page 153, which accompanies Parrott's description of Shakespeare's theater, makes the passage much easier to understand, helping readers to visualize the multiple stages where Shakespeare's plays were performed.

**CHECKLIST****Using Visuals Effectively**

If your instructor permits you to use visuals, ask the following questions to make sure that you have used them responsibly and effectively.

- **Does your visual add something to your paper?** For example, you could use a diagram to help explain a process, a chart or graph to clarify statistics, or a photograph to show an unusual structure.
- **Is your visual located as close as possible to where it is discussed in the paper?** This placement will establish the context for the visual and ensure that readers understand the reason why you have included it.
- **Have you documented your visual?** Like all material you borrow from a source, visuals must be documented. (For more on documentation, see Chapter 18.)

**TECH TIP: Finding Visuals**

You can find visuals on the Internet, on DVDs, or on clip-art compilations. You can also scan pictures you find in print sources or download pictures you take with a digital camera. Once the visual is downloaded onto your computer as a file, you can cut and paste it into your essay. Remember, however, that all visual material you get from a source — whether print or Internet — must be documented.

Understanding Subjective Description

In contrast to objective description, **subjective description** conveys your personal response to your subject. Here your perspective is not necessarily stated explicitly; often it is revealed indirectly, through your choice of words and phrasing. If an English composition assignment asks you to describe a place that has special meaning to you, you could give a subjective reaction to your topic by selecting and emphasizing details that show your feelings about the place. For example, you could write a subjective description of your room by focusing on particular objects — your desk, your window, and your bookshelves — and explaining the meanings these

things have for you. Thus, your desk could be a “warm brown rectangle of wood whose surface reveals the scratched impressions of a thousand school assignments.”

A subjective description should convey not just a literal record of sights and sounds but also their significance. For example, if you objectively described a fire that destroyed a house in your neighborhood, you might include its temperature, duration, and scope. In addition, you might describe, as accurately as possible, the fire’s movement and intensity. If you subjectively described the fire, however, you would try to re-create for your audience a sense of how the fire made you feel — your reactions to the noise, to the dense smoke, to the destruction.

In the following passage, notice how Mark Twain subjectively describes a sunset on the Mississippi River:

I still kept in mind a certain wonderful sunset which I witnessed when steamboating was new to me. A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood; in the middle distance the red hue brightened into gold, through which a solitary log came floating, black and conspicuous; in one place a long, slanting mark lay sparkling upon the water; in another the surface was broken by boiling, tumbling rings, that were as many-tinted as an opal.

In this passage, Twain conveys his strong emotional reaction to the sunset by using vivid, powerful images, such as the river “turned to blood,” the “solitary log . . . black and conspicuous,” and the “boiling, tumbling rings.” He also chooses words that suggest great value, such as *gold* and *opal*.

Neither objective nor subjective description exists independently. Objective descriptions usually include some subjective elements, and subjective descriptions need some objective elements to convey a sense of reality. The skillful writer adjusts the balance between objectivity and subjectivity to suit the topic, thesis, audience, and purpose as well as occasion for writing.

Using Objective and Subjective Language

As the passages by Parrott and Twain illustrate, both objective and subjective descriptions rely on language that appeals to readers’ senses. But these two types of description use language differently. Objective descriptions rely on precise, factual language that presents a writer’s observations without conveying his or her attitude toward the subject. Subjective descriptions, however, often use richer and more suggestive language than objective descriptions do. They are more likely to rely on the **connotations** of words, their emotional associations, than on their **denotations**, or more direct meanings (such as those found in a dictionary). In addition, they may deliberately provoke the reader’s imagination with striking phrases or vivid language, including **figures of speech** such as *simile*, *metaphor*, *personification*, and *allusion*.

- A **simile** uses *like* or *as* to compare two dissimilar things. These comparisons occur frequently in everyday speech — for example, when someone claims to be “happy as a clam,” “free as a bird,” or “hungry as a bear.” As a rule, however, you should avoid overused expressions like these in your writing. Effective writers constantly strive to create original similes. In his essay “Once More to the Lake” (page 194), for instance, E. B. White uses a striking simile to describe the annoying sound of boats on a lake when he says that in the evening “they whined around one’s ears *like mosquitoes*.” Later in the same essay, he describes a thunderstorm as being “*like the revival of an old melodrama* that I had seen long ago with childish awe.”
- A **metaphor** compares two dissimilar things without using *like* or *as*. Instead of saying that something is *like* something else, a metaphor says it *is* something else. Mark Twain uses a metaphor when he says, “A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood.”
- **Personification** speaks of concepts or objects as if they had life or human characteristics. If you say that the wind whispered or that an engine died, you are using personification.
- An **allusion** is a reference to a person, place, event, or quotation that the writer assumes readers will recognize. In “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (page 566), for example, Martin Luther King Jr. enriches his argument by alluding to biblical passages and proverbs that he expects his audience of clergy to be familiar with.

Your purpose and audience determine whether you should use objective or subjective description. An assignment that specifically asks for reactions calls for a subjective description. Legal, medical, technical, business, and scientific writing assignments, however, usually require objective descriptions because their primary purpose is to give the audience factual information. Even in these areas, though, figures of speech are often used to describe an unfamiliar object or concept. For example, in their pioneering article on the structure of DNA, scientists James Watson and Francis Crick use a simile when they describe a molecule of DNA as looking like two spiral staircases winding around each other.

Selecting Details

Sometimes inexperienced writers pack their descriptions with general words such as *nice*, *great*, *terrific*, or *awful*, substituting their own reactions to an object for the qualities of the object itself. To produce an effective description, however, you must do more than just *say* something is wonderful — you must use details that evoke this response in your readers, as Twain does with the sunset. (Twain does use the word *wonderful* at the beginning of his description, but he then goes on to supply many specific details that make the scene he describes vivid and specific.)

All good descriptive writing, whether objective or subjective, relies on **specific details**. Your aim is not simply to *tell* readers what something looks like but to *show* them. Every person, place, or thing has its special characteristics, and you should use your powers of observation to detect them. Then, you need to select the specific words that will enable your readers to imagine what you describe. Don't be satisfied with "He looked angry" when you can say, "His face flushed, and one corner of his mouth twitched as he tried to control his anger." What's the difference? In the first case, you simply identify the man's emotional state. In the second, you provide enough detail so that readers can tell not only that he was angry but also how he revealed the intensity of his anger.

Of course, you could have provided even more detail by describing the man's beard, his wrinkles, or any number of other features. Keep in mind, however, that not all details are equally useful or desirable. You should include only those that contribute to the dominant impression you wish to create. Thus, in describing a man's face to show how angry he was, you would probably not include the shape of his nose or the color of his hair. (After all, a person's hair color does not change when he or she gets angry.) In fact, the number of particulars you use is less important than their quality and appropriateness. You should select and use only those details relevant to your purpose.

Factors such as the level, background, and knowledge of your audience also influence the kinds of details you include. For example, a description of a DNA molecule written for high school students would contain more basic descriptive details than a description written for college biology majors. In addition, the more advanced description would contain details — the sequence of amino acid groups, for instance — that might be inappropriate for high school students.

Planning a Descriptive Essay

Developing a Thesis Statement

Writers of descriptive essays often use an **implied thesis** when they describe a person, place, or thing. This technique allows them to convey an essay's main idea subtly, through the selection and arrangement of details. When they use description to support a particular point, however, many writers prefer to use an **explicitly stated thesis**. This strategy lets readers see immediately what point the writer is making — for example, "The sculptures that adorn Philadelphia's City Hall are a catalog of nineteenth-century artistic styles."

Whether you state or imply your thesis, the details of your descriptive essay must work together to create a single **dominant impression** — the mood or quality emphasized in the piece of writing. In many cases, your thesis may be just a statement of the dominant impression; sometimes,

however, your thesis may go further and make a point about that dominant impression.

Organizing Details

When you plan a descriptive essay, you usually begin by writing down descriptive details in no particular order. You then arrange these details in a way that supports your thesis and communicates your dominant impression. As you consider how to arrange your details, keep in mind that you have a number of options. For example, you can move from a specific description of an object to a general description of other things around it. Or you can reverse this order, beginning with the general and proceeding to the specific. You can also progress from the least important feature to the most important one, from the smallest to the largest item, from the least unusual to the most unusual detail, or from left to right, right to left, top to bottom, or bottom to top. Another option is to combine approaches, using different organizing schemes in different parts of the essay. The strategy you choose depends on the dominant impression you want to convey, your thesis, and your purpose and audience.

Using Transitions

Be sure to include all the transitional words and phrases readers need to follow your description. Without them, readers will have difficulty understanding the relationship between one detail and another. Throughout your description, especially in the topic sentences of your body paragraphs, use words or phrases indicating the spatial arrangement of details. In descriptive essays, the transitions commonly used include *above*, *adjacent to*, *at the bottom*, *at the top*, *behind*, *below*, *beyond*, *in front of*, *in the middle*, *next to*, *over*, *under*, *through*, and *within*. (A more complete list of transitions appears on page 57.)

Structuring a Descriptive Essay

Descriptive essays begin with an **introduction** that presents the **thesis** or establishes the **dominant impression** that the rest of the essay will develop. Each **body paragraph** includes details that support the thesis or convey the dominant impression. The **conclusion** reinforces the thesis or dominant impression, perhaps echoing an idea stated in the introduction or using a particularly effective simile or metaphor.

Suppose your English composition instructor has asked you to write a short essay describing a person, place, or thing. After thinking about the assignment for a day or two, you decide to write an objective description of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, because you have visited it recently and many details are fresh in your mind. The


museum is large and has many different exhibits, so you know you cannot describe them all. Therefore, you decide to concentrate on one, the heavier-than-air flight exhibit, and you choose as your topic the display you remember most vividly — Charles Lindbergh’s airplane, *The Spirit of St. Louis*. You begin by brainstorming to recall all the details you can. When you read over your notes, you realize that you could present the details of the airplane in the order in which your eye took them in, from front to rear. The dominant impression you wish to create is how small and fragile *The Spirit of St. Louis* appears, and your thesis statement communicates this impression. An informal outline for your essay might look like this.

SAMPLE OUTLINE: Description

Introduction:	Thesis statement — It is startling that a plane as small as <i>The Spirit of St. Louis</i> could fly across the Atlantic.
Front of plane:	Single engine, tiny cockpit
Middle of plane:	Short wingspan, extra gas tanks
Rear of plane:	Limited cargo space filled with more gas tanks
Conclusion:	Restatement of thesis or review of key points or details

Revising a Descriptive Essay

When you revise a descriptive essay, consider the items on the revision checklist on page 68. In addition, pay special attention to the items on the following checklist, which apply specifically to descriptive essays.

 REVISION CHECKLIST	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your assignment call for description? • Does your descriptive essay clearly communicate its thesis or dominant impression? • Is your description primarily objective or subjective? • If your description is primarily objective, have you used precise, factual language? Would your essay be enriched by a visual? • If your description is primarily subjective, have you used figures of speech as well as words that convey your feelings and emotions? • Have you included enough specific details? • Have you arranged your details in a way that supports your thesis and communicates your dominant impression? • Have you used the transitional words and phrases that readers need to follow your description?

Editing a Descriptive Essay

When you edit your descriptive essay, follow the guidelines in the editing checklists on pages 85, 88, and 90. In addition, focus on the grammar, mechanics, and punctuation issues particularly relevant to descriptive essays. One of these issues — avoiding misplaced and dangling modifiers — is discussed below.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

Avoiding Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

When writing descriptive essays, you use **modifying words and phrases** to describe people, places, and objects. Because these modifiers are important in descriptive essays, you need to place them correctly to ensure they clearly refer to the words they describe.

Avoiding Misplaced Modifiers A **misplaced modifier** appears to modify the wrong word because it is placed incorrectly in the sentence. Sentences that contain misplaced modifiers are always illogical and frequently humorous.

MISPLACED: E. B. White’s son swam in the lake wearing an old bathing suit. *(Was the lake wearing a bathing suit?)*

MISPLACED: From the cabin, the sounds of the woods were heard by E. B. White and his son. *(Were the sounds of the woods inside the cabin?)*

In these sentences, the phrases *wearing an old bathing suit* and *from the cabin* appear to modify words that they cannot logically modify. You can correct these errors and avoid confusion by moving each modifier as close as possible to the word it is supposed to modify.

CORRECT: Wearing an old bathing suit, E. B. White’s son swam in the lake.

CORRECT: From the cabin, E. B. White and his son heard the sounds of the woods.

Avoiding Dangling Modifiers A modifier “dangles” when it cannot logically modify any word that appears in the sentence. Often, these **dangling modifiers** come at the beginning of sentences (as present or past participle phrases), where they illogically seem to modify the words that come immediately after them.

DANGLING: Determined to get a better look, the viewing platform next to St. Paul’s Chapel was crowded. *(Who was determined to get a better look?)*

DANGLING: Standing on the corner, the cranes, jackhammers, and bulldozers worked feverishly at ground zero. (*Who was standing on the corner?*)

In the preceding sentences, the phrases *determined to get a better look* and *standing on the corner* seem to modify *the viewing platform* and *cranes, jackhammers, and bulldozers*, respectively. However, these sentences make no sense. How can a viewing platform get a better look? How can cranes, jackhammers, and bulldozers stand on a corner? In addition, the two sentences do not contain the words that the modifying phrases are supposed to describe. In each case, you can correct the problem by supplying the missing word and rewriting the sentence accordingly.

CORRECT: Determined to get a better look, people crowded the viewing platform next to St. Paul's Chapel.

CORRECT: Standing on the corner, people watched the cranes, jackhammers, and bulldozers work feverishly at ground zero.

For more practice in avoiding misplaced and dangling modifiers, visit the resources for Chapter 7 at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.



EDITING CHECKLIST

Description

- Have you avoided misplaced modifiers?
- Have you avoided dangling modifiers?
- Have you used figures of speech effectively?
- Have you avoided general words such as *nice*, *great*, and *terrific*?

A STUDENT WRITER: Objective Description

The following essay, an objective description of a globe from 1939, was written by Mallory Cogan for a composition class. The assignment was to write a description of an object that has special meaning for her.

My Grandfather's Globe

Introduction

Each afternoon, sunlight slants through the windows of my grandfather's bedroom. Slowly, slowly, it sweeps over the bookshelves. Late in the day, just before the light disappears altogether, it rests sleepily on a globe in the corner. My grandfather bought this globe in 1939, just before World War II. The world has changed since then, and the globe is a record of what it looked like at that time.

Thesis statement

*Description
of Western
Hemisphere*

Turning the globe left, I begin my world tour. The blue 2
of the Pacific Ocean gives way to the faded pinks, browns, and
oranges of North and South America. In the north is a large area
dotted with lakes and bays. This is the Dominion of Canada, now
simply Canada. In the far north, the Canadian mainland breaks
into islands that extend into the Arctic Ocean. Below it is the
multicolored United States. To the north, Canada sprawls and
breaks apart; to the south, Mexico narrows, then curves east,
extended by the uneven strip of land that is Central America.
This strip of land is connected to the northernmost part of South
America. South America, in the same colors as the United States,
looks like a face in profile looking east, with a nose extending
into the Atlantic Ocean and a long neck that narrows as it reaches
toward Antarctica at the South Pole.

*Description
of Africa*

As I trace the equator east across the Atlantic Ocean, I 3
come to French Equatorial Africa. The huge African continent, like
a fat boomerang, is labeled with names of European countries. A
large, kidney-shaped purple area to the northwest is called French
West Africa. To the east, about halfway down the continent, is
the Belgian Congo, a substantial orange splotch that straddles
the equator. On the eastern coast just above the equator is a
somewhat smaller, almost heart-shaped yellow area called Italian
East Africa. These regions, once European colonies, are now
divided into dozens of independent countries.

*Description
of Europe*

Moving north, I follow the thick blue ribbon of the 4
Mediterranean Sea until I reach Western Europe. I pause on yellow,
boot-shaped Italy and glance to the west and southwest at purple
France and orange Spain. The northwestern coasts of both countries
extend slightly into the Atlantic. To the northwest of France, the
pink clusters of the British Isles droop like bunches of grapes.

*Description
of Europe and
changes
since 1939*

Looking eastward, I see a water stain on Germany. It 5
extends down through Italy and across the Mediterranean, ending
in the Sahara Desert on the African continent. Following the stain
back into Europe, I look north, where Norway, Sweden, and Finland
reach toward the rest of Europe. Returning to Germany, I move
east, through Poland. On a modern globe, I would find Belarus
and Ukraine on Poland's eastern border. On this globe, however,
my finger passes directly into a vast area called the Union of
Soviet Socialist Republics. The U.S.S.R. (today called the Russian
Federation) cuts a wide swath across the northern part of the

Asian continent; there is plenty of room for its long name to be displayed horizontally across the country's light-brown surface. Still in the southern half of the country, I travel east, crossing the landlocked Caspian Sea into a region of the U.S.S.R. called Turkistan, now the country of Turkmenistan. To the southeast, green Afghanistan sits between light-purple Iran to the west and pink India to the east. India is cone shaped, but with a pointed top, and green rectangular Nepal sits atop its western border.

*Description of
China and
additional changes*

Looking north again, I continue moving east. In Tibet, there is a small tear in the globe. I continue into China's vast interior. Just as the U.S.S.R. blankets the northern part of the Asian continent, China spreads over much of the southeast. I notice that China's borders on this globe are different from what they are today. On my grandfather's globe, China includes Mongolia but not a purple region to the northwest labeled Manchoukuo, also known as Manchuria. Following Manchoukuo to its southern border, I see a strip of land that extends into the sea, surrounded by water on three sides. The area is small, so its name — Chosen — has been printed in the Sea of Japan to the east. Today, it is called Korea.

*Description of
Southeast Asia*

Backtracking west and dropping south, past China's southern border, I see Siam, now called Thailand. Siam is a three-leaf clover with a stem that hangs down. Wrapped along its eastern border, bordering two of its "leaves," is a purple country called French Indo-China. Today, this region is divided into the countries of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Bordering Siam on the west is the larger country of Burma, in pink. Like Siam, Burma is top-heavy, like a flower or a clover with a thin stem.

*Description of
Indonesia and
Australia*

Tracing that stem south, I come to the numerous islands of Indonesia, splashes of yellow spreading east-west along, above, and below the equator. I do not need to travel much farther before I arrive at an island bigger than any other on this globe: Australia. This country is pink and shaped like half of a very thick doughnut. On Australia's eastern coast is the Pacific; on its western coast is the Indian Ocean.

Conclusion

Of course, it is not surprising that I would end where I started, with the ocean, since water covers seventy percent of the Earth. Still, countries — not oceans — are what interest me most about this globe. The shifting names and borders of countries that no longer exist remind me that although the world seems fixed,

just as it did to the people of 1939, it is always changing. The change happens slowly, like the sun crossing my grandfather's room. Caught at any single moment, the world, like the afternoon light, appears still and mysterious.

Points for Special Attention

Objective Description. Because her essay is primarily an objective description, Mallory keeps her description straightforward. She uses concrete language and concentrates on the shapes, colors, and surroundings of the countries she describes.

This objective description does include a few subjective elements. For example, in her introduction, Mallory says that the sunlight rests “sleepily” on her grandfather’s globe. In her conclusion, she observes that the world represented by her grandfather’s globe is “still and mysterious.” (Her instructor had told the class that they could include a few subjective comments to convey the special meaning that the items they describe have for them.)

Figurative Language. In order to give readers a clear sense of what the countries on the globe look like, Mallory uses figurative language. For example, she uses **similes** when she describes South America as “like a face in profile” and Africa as looking “like a fat boomerang.” She also uses **metaphor** when she says that the Mediterranean Sea is a “thick blue ribbon” and Siam is “a three-leaf clover with a stem that hangs down.” Finally, Mallory uses **personification** when she says that the Belgian Congo “straddles the equator.” By using these figures of speech, Mallory creates a vivid and striking picture of her grandfather’s globe.

Structure. Mallory structures her description by moving from north to south as she moves east around the globe. She begins by describing the colors of North America, and then she describes South America. She directs her readers’ attention to specific areas – for example, Central America. She then moves east, to Africa, and repeats the process of describing the regions in the north (Western Europe) and then in the south (Africa). As she does so, she notes that some countries, such as the U.S.S.R., have changed names since the globe was made in 1939. She repeats the pattern of moving east, north, and south and ends by describing Australia. Mallory frames her description of the globe with a description of her grandfather’s bedroom. In her conclusion, she connects the sunlight in her grandfather’s room to the world pictured on the globe by observing that both seem “still and mysterious.”

Selection of Detail. Mallory’s instructor defined her audience as people who know about the world today but have never seen her grandfather’s globe and do not know much about the world in 1939. For this reason,

Mallory includes details such as the tear in Tibet and the water stain that runs through Germany and Italy. In addition, she explains how some countries' names and borders differ from those that exist today.

Working with Sources. Before she wrote her essay, Mallory thought about looking at old atlases or history books. She decided that because her assignment called for a description of an object — not an analysis of how the world changed due to war or to the decline of colonialism — she did not have to consult these sources. She did, however, look up a few facts, such as the current name of Manchoukuo, but since facts are considered common knowledge, she did not have to document her sources for this information.

Focus on Revision

Mallory's peer editing group suggested three changes. One student said Mallory should include descriptions of more countries, such as Japan in Asia and Chile, Argentina, and Brazil in South America. This student thought that without these descriptions, readers would not fully appreciate how much information the globe contained. Another student suggested that Mallory add more detail about the globe itself, such as its size, whether it was on a table or on the floor, and the materials from which it was constructed. A third student suggested that Mallory include a picture of the globe in her essay. He thought that this picture would give students a clear idea of what the globe looked like and would eliminate the need to add more description.

Mallory decided to write a short paragraph (and insert it between paragraphs 1 and 2) that provided a general description of the globe. She decided to add a picture because even with all the vivid description she included, she thought that the globe might be hard to picture. However, she decided that she had mentioned enough countries in her essay and that adding more would be repetitious and might cause readers to lose interest. (A sample peer editing worksheet for description appears on page 168.)

A STUDENT WRITER: Subjective Description

The essay that follows, a subjective description of an area in Burma (renamed Myanmar after a military coup in 1989), was written by Mary Lim for her composition class. Her assignment was to write an essay about a place that had a profound effect on her. Mary's essay uses **subjective description** so that readers can share, as well as understand, her experience.

The Valley of Windmills

Introduction

In my native country of Burma, strange happenings and exotic scenery are not unusual, for Burma is a mysterious land

*Description
(identifying the scene)*

that in some areas seems to have been ignored by time. Mountains stand jutting their rocky peaks into the clouds as they have for thousands of years. Jungles are so dense with exotic vegetation that human beings or large animals cannot even enter. But one of the most fascinating areas in Burma is the Valley of Windmills, nestled between the tall mountains near the fertile and beautiful city of Taungaleik. In this valley there is beautiful and breathtaking scenery, but there are also old, massive, and gloomy structures that can disturb a person deeply.

*Description
(moving toward the valley)*

The road to Taungaleik twists out of the coastal flatlands 2
into those heaps of slag, shale, and limestone that are the Tennesserim Mountains in the southern part of Burma. The air grows rarer and cooler, and stones become grayer, the highway a little more precarious at its edges, until, ahead, standing in ghostly sentinel across the lip of a pass, is a line of squat forms.

*Description
(immediate view)*

They straddle the road and stand at intervals up hillsides on either side. Are they boulders? Are they fortifications? Are they broken wooden crosses on graves in an abandoned cemetery?

*Description
(more distant view)*

These dark figures are windmills standing in the misty 3
atmosphere. They are immensely old and distinctly evil, some merely turrets, some with remnants of arms hanging derelict from their snouts, and most of them covered with dark green moss. Their decayed but still massive forms seem to turn and sneer at visitors. Down the pass on the other side is a circular green plateau that lies like an arena below, where there are still more windmills. Massed in the plain behind them, as far as the eye can see, in every field, above every hut, stand ten thousand iron windmills, silent and sailless. They seem to await only a call from a watchman to clank, whirr, flap, and groan into action. Visitors suddenly feel cold. Perhaps it is a sense of loneliness, the cool air, the desolation, or the weirdness of the arcane windmills — but something chills them.

Conclusion

As you stand at the lip of the valley, contrasts rush as if 4
to overwhelm you. Beyond, glittering on the mountainside like a solitary jewel, is Taungaleik in the territory once occupied by the Portuguese. Below, on rolling hillsides, are the dark windmills, still enveloped in morning mist. These ancient windmills can remind you of the impermanence of life and the mystery that still surrounds these hills. In a strange way, the scene in the valley can disturb you, but it also can give you an insight into the contrasts that seem to define our lives here in my country.

*Description
(windmills contrasted with city)*

Thesis statement

Points for Special Attention

Subjective Description. One of the first things her classmates noticed when they read Mary's essay was her use of vivid details. The road to Taungaleik is described in specific terms: it twists "out of the coastal flatlands" into the mountains, which are "heaps of slag, shale, and limestone." The iron windmills are decayed and stand "silent and sailless" on a green plateau that "lies like an arena." Through her use of detail, Mary creates her dominant impression of the Valley of Windmills as dark, mysterious, and disquieting. The point of her essay — the thesis — is stated in the last paragraph: the Valley of Windmills embodies the contrasts that characterize life in Burma.

Subjective Language. By describing the windmills, Mary conveys her sense of foreboding. When she first introduces them, she questions whether these "squat forms" are "boulders," "fortifications," or "broken wooden crosses," each of which has a menacing connotation. After telling readers what they are, she uses **personification**, describing the windmills as dark, evil, sneering figures with "arms hanging derelict." She sees them as ghostly sentinels awaiting "a call from a watchman" to spring into action. With this figure of speech, Mary skillfully re-creates the unearthly quality of the scene.

Structure. Mary's purpose in this paper was to give her readers the experience of being in the Valley of Windmills. She uses an organizing scheme that takes readers along the road to Taungaleik, up into the Tennesserim Mountains, and finally to the pass where the windmills wait. From her perspective on the lip of the valley, she describes the details closest to her and then those farther away, as if following the movement of her eyes. She ends by bringing her readers back to the lip of the valley, contrasting Taungaleik "glittering on the mountainside" with the windmills "enveloped in morning mist." With her description, Mary builds up to her thesis about the nature of life in her country. She withholds the explicit statement of her main point until her last paragraph, when readers are fully prepared for it.

Focus on Revision

One of Mary's classmates thought that her essay's thesis about life in Burma needed additional support. The student pointed out that although Mary's description is quite powerful, it does not fully convey the contrasts she alludes to in her conclusion.

Mary decided that adding another paragraph discussing something about her life (perhaps her reasons for visiting the windmills) could help supply this missing information. She could, for example, tell her readers that right after her return from the valley, she found out that a friend had been accidentally shot by border guards and that this event caused her to

characterize the windmills as she did. Such information would help explain the passage's somber mood and underscore the ideas presented in the conclusion.

Working with Sources. Another one of Mary's classmates suggested that she add some information about the political situation in Burma. He pointed out that few, if any, students in the class knew much about Burma — for example, that after a coup in 1989, the military threw out the civilian government and changed the name of Burma to Myanmar. In addition, he said that he had no idea how repressive the current government of Burma was. For this reason, the student thought that readers would benefit from a paragraph that gave a short history of Burma. Mary considered this option but decided that such information would distract readers from the main point of her description.



PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: Description

1. What is the essay's dominant impression or thesis?
2. What points does the writer emphasize in the introduction? Should any other points be included? If so, which ones?
3. Would you characterize the essay as primarily an objective or subjective description? What leads you to your conclusion?
4. Point out some examples of figures of speech. Could the writer use figures of speech in other places? If so, where?
5. What specific details does the writer use to help readers visualize what is being described? Where could the writer have used more details? Would a visual have helped readers understand what is being described?
6. Are all the details necessary? Can you identify any that seem excessive or redundant? Where could the writer have provided more details to support the thesis or convey the dominant impression?
7. How are the details in the essay arranged? What other arrangement could the writer have used?
8. List some transitional words and phrases the writer uses to help readers follow the discussion. Which sentences need transitional words or phrases to link them to other sentences?
9. Do any sentences contain misplaced or dangling modifiers? If so, which ones?
10. How effective is the essay's conclusion? Does the conclusion reinforce the dominant impression?

The following selections illustrate various ways description can shape an essay. As you read them, pay particular attention to the differences between objective and subjective description. The first selection, a visual text, is followed by questions designed to illustrate how description can operate in visual form.

Rice

The daughter of Indian immigrants, Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London in 1967. Her family moved to the United States, where she attended Barnard College and received multiple graduate degrees, including a Ph.D. in Renaissance studies from Boston University. She is the author of three books, including *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and *The Namesake* (2003), as well as many short stories. Lahiri has won several literary awards, including a Pulitzer Prize and a PEN/Hemingway Award. Her fiction often explores Indian and Indian-American life and culture — as does this personal essay, which originally appeared in the *New Yorker* magazine.

Background on rice Along with corn and wheat, rice remains one of the most important crops in the world, especially in Asia, where it has been cultivated for thousands of years. Rice accounts for between 35 percent and 85 percent of the calories consumed by billions of people living in India, China, and other Asian countries. Indeed, the ancient Indian word for rice (“dhanya”) means “sustainer of the human race.” But rice can be symbolic as well: we throw rice at weddings because it suggests fertility and prosperity. For Lahiri, the significance of rice is personal rather than universal. She describes her father’s pulao dish as both an expression of his idiosyncratic personality and a symbol that binds her family together.

My father, seventy-eight, is a methodical man. For thirty-nine years, he 1
has had the same job, cataloguing books for a university library. He drinks
two glasses of water first thing in the morning, walks for an hour every day,
and devotes almost as much time, before bed, to flossing his teeth. “Wing-
ing it” is not a term that comes to mind in describing my father. When he’s
driving to new places, he does not enjoy getting lost.

In the kitchen, too, he walks a deliberate line, counting out the raisins 2
that go into his oatmeal (fifteen) and never boiling even a drop more water
than required for tea. It is my father who knows how many cups of rice are
necessary to feed four, or forty, or a hundred and forty people. He has a
reputation for *andaj* — the Bengali word for “estimate” — accurately gaug-
ing quantities that tend to baffle other cooks. An oracle of rice, if you will.

But there is another rice that my father is more famous for. This is not 3
the white rice, boiled like pasta and then drained in a colander, that most
Bengalis eat for dinner. This other rice is pulao, a baked, buttery, sophisti-
cated indulgence, Persian in origin, served at festive occasions. I have often
watched him make it. It involves sautéing grains of basmati in butter, along
with cinnamon sticks, cloves, bay leaves, and cardamom pods. In go halved
cashews and raisins (unlike the oatmeal raisins, these must be golden, not

black). Ginger, pulverized into a paste, is incorporated, along with salt and sugar, nutmeg and mace, saffron threads if they're available, ground turmeric if not. A certain amount of water is added, and the rice simmers until most of the water evaporates. Then it is spread out in a baking tray. (My father prefers disposable aluminum ones, which he recycled long before recycling laws were passed.) More water is flicked on top with his fingers, in the ritual and cryptic manner of Catholic priests. Then the tray, covered with foil, goes into the oven, until the rice is cooked through and not a single grain sticks to another.

Despite having a superficial knowledge of the ingredients and the technique, I have no idea how to make my father's pulao, nor would I ever dare attempt it. The recipe is his own, and has never been recorded. There has never been an unsuccessful batch, yet no batch is ever identical to any other. It is a dish that has become an extension of himself, that he has perfected, and to which he has earned the copyright. A dish that will die with him when he dies.

In 1968, when I was seven months old, my father made pulao for the first time. We lived in London, in Finsbury Park, where my parents shared the kitchen, up a steep set of stairs in the attic of the house, with another Bengali couple. The occasion was my *annaprasan*, a rite of passage in which Bengali children are given solid food for the first time; it is known colloquially as a *bhath*, which happens to be the Bengali word for "cooked rice." In the oven of a stove no more than twenty inches wide, my father baked pulao for about thirty-five people. Since then, he has made pulao for the *annaprasans* of his friends' children, for birthday parties and anniversaries, for bridal and baby showers, for wedding receptions, and for my sister's Ph.D. party. For a few decades, after we moved to the United States, his pulao fed crowds of up to four hundred people, at events organized by Prabasi, a Bengali cultural institution in New England, and he found himself at institutional venues — schools and churches and community centers — working with industrial ovens and stoves. This has never unnerved him. He could probably rig up a system to make pulao out of a hot-dog cart, were someone to ask.

There are times when certain ingredients are missing, when he must use almonds instead of cashews, when the raisins in a friend's cupboard are the wrong color. He makes it anyway, with exacting standards but a sanguine hand.

When my son and daughter were infants, and we celebrated their *annaprasans*, we hired a caterer, but my father made the pulao, preparing it at home in Rhode Island and transporting it in the trunk of his car to Brooklyn. The occasion, both times, was held at the Society for Ethical Culture, in Park Slope. In 2002, for my son's first taste of rice, my father warmed the trays on the premises, in the giant oven in the basement. But by 2005, when it was my daughter's turn, the representative on duty would not permit my father to use the oven, telling him that he was not a licensed cook. My father transferred the pulao from his aluminum

trays into glass baking dishes, and microwaved, batch by batch, rice that fed almost a hundred people. When I asked my father to describe that experience, he expressed no frustration. “It was fine,” he said. “It was a big microwave.”

• • •

Comprehension

1. How does Lahiri describe her father? What is his most important character trait?
2. According to Lahiri, what is special about pulao? Why is it served just on festive occasions?
3. What is an *annaprasan*? Why is this occasion so important to Bengalis?
4. Why, according to Lahiri, would she never try to make pulao?
5. What does Lahiri mean when she says that pulao is a dish for which her father “has earned the copyright” (4)?

Purpose and Audience

1. How much does Lahiri assume her readers know about Bengali culture? How can you tell?
2. Is this essay simply about rice — more specifically pulao — or is it also about something else? Explain.
3. Does this essay have an explicitly stated or an implied thesis? What dominant impression do you think Lahiri wants to convey?

Style and Structure

1. Why does Lahiri begin her essay by describing her father?
2. This essay is divided into three parts: the first describes Lahiri’s father; the second describes the making of pulao; and the third describes the occasions on which her father cooked pulao. How does Lahiri signal the shift from one part of the essay to another? What other strategies could she have used?
3. Why does Lahiri go into so much detail about her father’s pulao recipe?
4. What does pulao mean to Lahiri? Does it have the same meaning for her father? Explain.
5. Why does Lahiri end her essay with a quotation? Is this an effective closing strategy? What other strategies could she have used?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.
 methodical (1) colander (3)
 deliberate (2) sanguine (6)
 oracle (2)
2. Throughout her essay, Lahiri uses several Bengali words. What might she have gained or lost if she had used English equivalents?

Journal Entry

What food do you associate with a specific member of your family? Why do you think this food has the association it does?

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** Write an essay in which you describe a food that is as meaningful for you as pulao is for Lahiri. Make sure that your essay has a clear thesis and that it includes at least one reference to Lahiri's essay. Be sure that you document all material that you borrow from Lahiri's essay and that you include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
2. Write an email to a friend in another country in which you describe the foods you traditionally eat on a particular holiday. Assume that the person is not familiar with the foods you describe. Be sure your email conveys a clear dominant impression.
3. Write an essay in which you describe a parent or grandparent (or any other older person) who has (or had) a great deal of influence on you. Make sure you include basic biographical information as well as a detailed physical description.

Combining the Patterns

In addition to describing Lahiri's experience with pulao, this essay contains an explanation of a **process** in paragraph 3. What purpose does this process explanation serve?

Thematic Connections

- "The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria" (page 232)
- "Two Ways to Belong in America" (page 404)
- "Tortillas" (page 507)

Ground Zero

Suzanne Berne has worked as a journalist and has also published book reviews and personal essays as well as three well-received novels, including *The Ghost at the Table* (2006) and *Lucille* (2010). She currently teaches English at Boston College. In the following essay, which appeared on the *New York Times* op-ed page in April 2002, Berne describes a personal pilgrimage to the former site of the World Trade Center in New York City.

Background on the terrorist attacks of 9/11 The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that destroyed the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center and severely damaged the Pentagon stunned the nation and the world. People watched in horror as camera crews recorded the collapse of the towers while victims jumped to their deaths. The three hijacked aircraft that crashed into these targets, and a fourth that crashed into a field in rural Pennsylvania, caused the deaths of some three thousand people. An outpouring of grief, outrage, fear, and patriotism consumed the nation in the ensuing months. While many, like Berne, have felt drawn to visit "ground zero" (as it has come to be called), some family members of the victims — particularly of those whose unidentified remains are still at the site — have expressed concern that it not become a tourist attraction. A memorial at the site includes two huge reflecting pools where the original twin towers stood. The names of the nearly three thousand people who were killed in the September 11 attacks in New York City, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC (as well as those killed in the 1993 World Trade Center bombings) are inscribed around the edges of the pools. An underground museum, scheduled to open in 2012, will house exhibits that convey the experiences of responders, victims, and witnesses.

On a cold, damp March morning, I visited Manhattan's financial district, a place I'd never been, to pay my respects at what used to be the World Trade Center. Many other people had chosen to do the same that day, despite the raw wind and spits of rain, and so the first thing I noticed when I arrived on the corner of Vesey and Church Streets was a crowd. 1

Standing on the sidewalk, pressed against aluminum police barricades, 2 wearing scarves that flapped into their faces and woolen hats pulled over their ears, were people apparently from everywhere. Germans, Italians, Japanese. An elegant-looking Norwegian family in matching shearling coats. People from Ohio and California and Maine. Children, middle-aged couples, older people. Many of them were clutching cameras and video recorders, and they were all craning to see across the street, where there was nothing to see.

At least, nothing is what it first looked like, the space that is now 3 ground zero. But once your eyes adjust to what you are looking at, "nothing" becomes something much more potent, which is absence.

But to the out-of-towner, ground zero looks at first simply like a construction site. All the familiar details are there: the wooden scaffolding; the cranes, the bulldozers, and forklifts; the trailers and construction workers in hard hats; even the dust. There is the pound of jackhammers, the steady beep-beep-beep of trucks backing up, the roar of heavy machinery.

So much busyness is reassuring, and it is possible to stand looking at the cranes and trucks and feel that mild curiosity and hopefulness so often inspired by construction sites.

Then gradually your eyes do adjust, exactly as if you have stepped from a dark theater into a bright afternoon, because what becomes most striking about this scene is the light itself.

Ground zero is a great bowl of light, an emptiness that seems weirdly spacious and grand, like a vast plaza amid the dense tangle of streets in lower Manhattan. Light reflecting off the Hudson River vaults into the site, soaking everything – especially on an overcast morning – with a watery glow. This is the moment when absence begins to assume a material form, when what is not there becomes visible.

Suddenly you notice the periphery, the skyscraper shrouded in black plastic, the boarded windows, the steel skeleton of the shattered Winter Garden. Suddenly there are the broken steps and cracked masonry in front of Brooks Brothers. Suddenly there are the firefighters, the waiting ambulance on the other side of the pit, the police on every corner. Suddenly there is the enormous cross made of two rusted girders.

And suddenly, very suddenly, there is the little cemetery attached to St. Paul's Chapel, with tulips coming up, the chapel and grounds miraculously undamaged except for a few plastic-sheathed gravestones. The iron fence is almost invisible beneath a welter of dried pine wreaths, banners, ribbons, laminated poems and prayers and photographs, swags of paper cranes, withered flowers, baseball hats, rosary beads, teddy bears. And flags, flags everywhere, little American flags fluttering in the breeze, flags on posters drawn by Brownie troops, flags on T-shirts, flags on hats, flags streaming by, tied to the handles of baby strollers.

It takes quite a while to see all of this; it takes even longer to come up with something to say about it.

An elderly man standing next to me had been staring fixedly across the street for some time. Finally he touched his son's elbow and said: "I watched those towers being built. I saw this place when they weren't there." Then he stopped, clearly struggling with, what for him, was a double negative, recalling an absence before there was an absence. His son, waiting patiently, took a few photographs. "Let's get out of here," the man said at last.

Again and again I heard people say, "It's unbelievable." And then they would turn to each other, dissatisfied. They wanted to say something more expressive, more meaningful. But it *is* unbelievable, to stare at so much devastation, and know it for devastation, and yet recognize that it does not look like the devastation one has imagined.

Like me, perhaps, the people around me had in mind images from television and newspaper pictures: the collapsing buildings, the running office

workers, the black plume of smoke against a bright blue sky. Like me, they were probably trying to superimpose those terrible images onto the industrious emptiness right in front of them. The difficulty of this kind of mental revision is measured, I believe, by the brisk trade in World Trade Center photograph booklets at tables set up on street corners.

Determined to understand better what I was looking at, I decided to get a ticket for the viewing platform beside St. Paul's. This proved no easy task, as no one seemed to be able to direct me to South Street Seaport, where the tickets are distributed. Various police officers whom I asked for directions waved me vaguely toward the East River, differing degrees of boredom and resignation on their faces. Or perhaps it was a kind of incredulosity. Somewhere around the American Stock Exchange, I asked a security guard for help and he frowned at me, saying, "You want tickets to the disaster?"

Finally I found myself in line at a cheerfully painted kiosk, watching a young juggler try to entertain the crowd. He kept dropping the four red balls he was attempting to juggle, and having to chase after them. It was noon; the next available viewing was at 4 P.M.

Back I walked, up Fulton Street, the smell of fish in the air, to wander again around St. Paul's. A deli on Vesey Street advertised a view of the World Trade Center from its second-floor dining area. I went in and ordered a pastrami sandwich, uncomfortably aware that many people before me had come to that same deli for pastrami sandwiches who would never come there again. But I was here to see what I could, so I carried my sandwich upstairs and sat down beside one of the big plate-glass windows.

And there, at last, I got my ticket to the disaster.

I could see not just into the pit now, but also its access ramp, which trucks had been traveling up and down since I had arrived that morning. Gathered along the ramp were firefighters in their black helmets and black coats. Slowly they lined up, and it became clear that this was an honor guard, and that someone's remains were being carried up the ramp toward the open door of an ambulance.

Everyone in the dining room stopped eating. Several people stood up, whether out of respect or to see better, I don't know. For a moment, everything paused.

Then the day flowed back into itself. Soon I was outside once more, joining the tide of people washing around the site. Later, as I huddled with a little crowd on the viewing platform, watching people scrawl their names or write "God Bless America" on the plywood walls, it occurred to me that a form of repopulation was taking effect, with so many visitors to this place, thousands of visitors, all of us coming to see the wide emptiness where so many were lost. And by the act of our visiting — whether we are motivated by curiosity or horror or reverence or grief, or by something confusing that combines them all — that space fills up again.

Comprehension

1. What does Berne mean when she says that as her eyes adjust to what she is seeing, “‘nothing’ becomes something much more potent, which is absence” (3)?
2. Why does it take “quite a while” (10) to see all the details at ground zero? Why does it take “even longer” (10) to think of something to say about it?
3. According to Berne, how were the television pictures of ground zero different from the actual experience of seeing it?
4. How does the area around ground zero contrast with the site itself? How does Berne react to this contrast?
5. What does Berne mean in her conclusion when she says that with so many visitors coming to see ground zero, a form of “repopulation” (20) is taking place? Do you think she is being **sarcastic**?

Purpose and Audience

1. Does Berne state or imply her thesis? Why do you think she makes the decision she does? State Berne’s thesis in your own words.
2. What is Berne’s purpose in writing her essay?
3. What assumptions does Berne make about her readers’ ideas about ground zero? How can you tell?

Style and Structure

1. Why does Berne begin her essay by saying she had never before visited Manhattan’s financial district?
2. What organizational scheme does Berne use? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this scheme?
3. In paragraph 3, Berne says that ground zero at first looks like “nothing”; in paragraph 4, she says that it looks like a construction site. Then, in paragraph 7, she describes ground zero as “a great bowl of light.” And finally, in her conclusion, she refers to it as a pit (18). Why do you think Berne describes ground zero in so many different ways?
4. Berne leaves a space between paragraphs 17 and 18. In what way does the space (as well as paragraph 17) reinforce a shift in her essay’s focus?
5. Why does Berne end her essay with a description of the crowd standing on the viewing platform? Why do you suppose she feels the need to include these observations?
6. In paragraphs 8 and 9, Berne repeats the word *suddenly*. What is the effect of this repetition? Could she have achieved this effect some other way?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

shearling (2)	devastation (12)
potent (3)	incredulousness (14)
periphery (8)	repopulation (20)
laminated (9)	
2. A **paradox** is a seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true. Find examples of paradoxes in “Ground Zero.” Why do you think Berne uses these paradoxes?
3. List ten striking visual details Berne uses to describe people and objects. Can you think of other details she could have used?
4. Go to dictionary.com and look up the meaning of the term *ground zero*. What connotations does this term have? Do you think this is an appropriate title for Berne’s essay?

Journal Entry

Go to the Web site wtc.vjs.org and look at film clips of ground zero after the twin towers collapsed. Are your reactions to these images similar to or different from Berne’s?

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** Write an essay describing what you saw in the film clips you watched for your journal entry. Be sure to include an explicitly stated thesis and use descriptive details to convey your reactions to the event. If you can, include a quotation from Berne’s essay in your paper. Be sure to document the quotation and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
2. Write a description of a place from several different vantage points, as Berne does. Make sure each of your perspectives provides different information about the place you are describing.
3. Write a subjective description of a scene you remember from your childhood. In your thesis statement and in your conclusion, explain how your adult impressions of the scene differ from those of your childhood.

Combining the Patterns

In addition to containing a great deal of description, this essay also uses **comparison and contrast**. In paragraphs 1 through 10, what two ways of seeing

ground zero does Berne compare? What points about each view of ground zero does she contrast?

Thematic Connections

- “The Socks” (page 109)
- “Shooting an Elephant” (page 133)
- “Once More to the Lake” (page 194)

HEATHER ROGERS

The Hidden Life of Garbage

Journalist Heather Rogers has written articles on the environmental effects of mass production and consumption for the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Utne Reader*, *Architecture*, and a variety of other publications. Her 2002 documentary film *Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life of Garbage* has been screened at festivals around the world and served as the basis for a book of the same title. Named an Editor's Choice by the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*, the book, published in 2005, traces the history and politics of household garbage in the United States, drawing connections between modern industrial production, consumer culture, and our contemporary throwaway lifestyle. In the following excerpt from the book, Rogers provides a detailed description of a giant landfill in central Pennsylvania and asks readers to think about the ramifications of accumulating so much trash. Her most recent book is *Green Gone Wrong: How Our Economy Is Undermining the Environmental Revolution* (2010).

Background on waste disposal Human beings have always faced the question of how to dispose of garbage. The first city dump was established in ancient Athens, and the government of Rome had begun the collection of municipal trash by 200 C.E. Even as late as the 1800s, garbage was, at worst, simply thrown out into the streets of U.S. cities or dumped into rivers and ditches; in more enlightened communities, it might have been carted to foul-smelling open dumps or burned in incinerators, creating clouds of dense smoke. Experiments with systematically covering the garbage in dumps began as early as the 1920s, and the first true “sanitary landfill,” as it was called, was created in Fresno, California, in 1937. Today, more than 60 percent of the solid waste in the United States ends up in landfills, and the amount of waste seems to keep growing. According to the Energy Information Administration, the amount of waste produced in the United States has more than doubled in the past thirty years, and it is estimated that the average American generates an astounding 4.5 pounds of trash every day.

In the dark chill of early morning, heavy steel garbage trucks chug and 1
creep along neighborhood collection routes. A worker empties the contents of each household's waste bin into the truck's rear compaction unit. Hydraulic compressors scoop up and crush the dross, cramming it into the enclosed hull. When the rig is full, the collector heads to a garbage depot called a “transfer station” to unload. From there the rejectamenta is taken to a recycling center, an incinerator or, most often, to what's called a “sanitary landfill.”

Land dumping has long been the favored disposal method in the U.S. 2
thanks to the relative low cost of burial and North America's abundant supply of unused acreage. Although the great majority of our castoffs go

to landfills, they are places the public is not meant to see. Today's garbage graveyards are sequestered, guarded, veiled. They are also high-tech, and, increasingly, located in rural areas that receive much of their rubbish from urban centers that no longer bury their own wastes.

There's a reason landfills are tucked away, on the edge of town, in 3 otherwise untraveled terrain, camouflaged by hydroseeded, neatly tiered slopes. If people saw what happened to their waste, lived with the stench, witnessed the scale of destruction, they might start asking difficult questions. Waste Management Inc., the largest rubbish handling corporation in the world, operates its Geological Reclamation Operations and Waste Systems (GROWS) landfill just outside Morrisville, Pennsylvania — in the docile river valley near where Washington momentarily crossed the Delaware leading his troops into Trenton in 1776. Sitting atop the landfill's 300-foot-high butte composed entirely of garbage, the logic of our society's unrestrained consuming and wasting quickly unravels.

Up here is where the dumping takes place; it is referred to as the fill's 4 "working face." Clusters of trailer trucks, yellow earthmovers, compacting machines, steamrollers, and water tankers populate this bizarre, thirty-acre nightmare. Churning in slow motion through the surreal landscape, these machines are remaking the earth in the image of garbage. Scores of seagulls hover overhead then suddenly drop into the rotting piles. The ground underfoot is torn from the metal treads of the equipment. Potato chip wrappers, tattered plastic bags, and old shoes poke through the dirt as if floating to the surface. The smell is sickly and sour.

The aptly named GROWS landfill is part of Waste Management Inc.'s 5 (WMI) 6,000-acre garbage treatment complex, which includes a second landfill, an incinerator, and a state-mandated leaf composting lot. GROWS is one of a new breed of waste burial sites referred to as "mega-fills." These high-tech, high-capacity dumps are comprised of a series of earth-covered "cells" that can be ten to one hundred acres across and up to hundreds of feet deep — or tall, as is the case at GROWS. (One Virginia whopper has disposal capacity equivalent to the length of one thousand football fields and the height of the Washington Monument.) As of 2002, GROWS was the single largest recipient of New York City's garbage in Pennsylvania, a state that is the country's biggest depository for exported waste.

WMI's Delaware-side operation sits on land that has long served the 6 interests of industry. Overlooking a rambling, mostly decommissioned US Steel factory, WMI now occupies the former grounds of the Warner Company. In the previous century, Warner surface mined the area for gravel and sand, much of which was shipped to its cement factory in Philadelphia. The area has since been converted into a reverse mine of sorts; instead of extraction, workers dump, pack, and fill the earth with almost forty million pounds of municipal wastes daily.

Back on top of the GROWS landfill, twenty-ton dump trucks gather 7 at the low end of the working face, where they discharge their fetid cargo. Several feet up a dirt bank, a string of large trailers are being detached from semi trucks. In rapid succession each container is tipped almost vertical by

a giant hydraulic lift and, within seconds, twenty-four tons of putrescence cascades down into the day's menacing valley of trash. In the middle of the dumping is a "landfill compactor" — which looks like a bulldozer on steroids with mammoth metal spiked wheels — that pitches back and forth, its fifty tons crushing the detritus into the earth. A smaller vehicle called a "track loader" maneuvers on tank treads, channeling the castoffs from kitchens and offices into the compactor's path. The place runs like a well-oiled machine, with only a handful of workers orchestrating the burial.

Get a few hundred yards from the landfill's working face and it's hard 8 to smell the rot or see the debris. The place is kept tidy with the help of thirty-five-foot-tall fencing made of "litter netting" that surrounds the perimeter of the site's two landfills. As a backup measure, teams of "paper pickers" constantly patrol the area retrieving discards carried off by the wind. Small misting machines dot fence tops, roads, and hillsides, spraying a fine, invisible chemical-water mixture into the air, which binds with odor molecules and pulls them to the ground.

In new state-of-the-art landfills, the cells that contain the trash are 9 built on top of what is called a "liner." The liner is a giant underground bladder intended to prevent contamination of groundwater by collecting leachate — liquid wastes and the rainwater that seeps through buried trash — and channeling it to nearby water treatment facilities. WMI's two Morrisville landfills leach on average 100,000 gallons daily. If this toxic stew contaminated the site's groundwater it would be devastating.

Once a cell is filled, which might take years, it is closed off or "capped." 10 The capping process entails covering the garbage with several feet of dirt, which gets graded, then packed by steamrollers. After that, layers of clay-embedded fabric, synthetic mesh, and plastic sheeting are draped across the top of the cell and joined with the bottom liner (which is made of the same materials) to encapsulate all those outmoded appliances, dirty diapers, and discarded wrappers.

Today's landfill regulations, ranging from liner construction to post- 11 capping oversight, mean that disposal areas like WMI's GROWS are potentially less dangerous than the dumps of previous generations. But the fact remains that these systems are short-term solutions to the garbage problem. While they may not seem toxic now, all those underground cells packed with plastics, solvents, paints, batteries, and other hazardous materials will someday have to be treated since the liners won't last forever. Most liners are expected to last somewhere between thirty and fifty years. That time frame just happens to coincide with the post-closure liability private landfill operators are subject to: thirty years after a site is shuttered, its owner is no longer responsible for contamination, the public is.

There is a palpable tension at waste treatment facilities, as though at 12 any minute the visitor will uncover some illegal activity. But what's most striking at these places isn't what they might be hiding; it's what's in plain view. The lavish resources dedicated to destroying used commodities and

making that obliteration acceptable, even “green,” is what’s so astounding. Each landfill (not to mention garbage collection systems, transfer stations, recycling centers, and incinerators) is an expensive, complex operation that uses the latest methods developed and perfected at laboratories, universities, and corporate campuses across the globe.

The more state-of-the-art, the more “environmentally responsible” the operation, the more the repressed question pushes to the surface: what if we didn’t have so much trash to get rid of?

• • •

Comprehension

1. According to Rogers, why are landfills “tucked away, on the edge of town, in otherwise untraveled terrain” (3)?
2. What is the landfill’s “working face” (4)? How does it compare with other parts of the landfill?
3. Why does Rogers think that the GROWS landfill is “aptly named” (5)? What **connotations** do you think Waste Management Inc. intended the name GROWS to have? What connotations does Rogers think the name has?
4. What are the dangers of the “new state-of-the-art landfills” (9)? What point does Rogers make about liners being “expected to last somewhere between thirty and fifty years” (11)?
5. According to Rogers, what is the “repressed question” (13) that is not being asked?

Purpose and Audience

1. At what point in the essay does Rogers state her thesis? Why do you think she places the thesis where she does?
2. What dominant impression does Rogers try to create in her description? Is she successful?
3. What is Rogers’s attitude toward waste disposal in general — and toward disposal companies like Waste Management Inc. in particular? Do you share her feelings?

Style and Structure

1. Rogers begins her essay with a description of garbage trucks collecting trash. What specific things does she describe? How does this description establish the context for the rest of the essay?
2. What determines the order in which details are arranged in Rogers’s essay?
3. Is this essay a subjective or objective description of the landfill? Explain.

4. In paragraph 13, why does Rogers put the phrase *environmentally responsible* in quotation marks? What impression is she trying to convey?
5. Rogers never offers a solution to the problems she writes about. Should she have done so? Is her failure to offer a solution a shortcoming of the essay?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

hydraulic (1)	putrescence (7)
rejectamenta (1)	cascades (7)
sequestered (2)	leach (9)
hydroseeded (3)	encapsulate (10)
butte (3)	palpable (12)
aptly (5)	lavish (12)
fetid (7)	obliteration (12)
2. Some critics of waste disposal methods accuse both municipalities and waste disposal companies of “environmental racism.” Research this term on the Web. Do you think the methods described by Rogers are examples of environmental racism? Explain.
3. Underline the adjectives Rogers uses when she describes garbage in paragraph 7. How do these adjectives help her make her point?

Journal Entry

What do you think you and your family could do to reduce the amount of garbage you produce? How realistic are your suggestions?

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** Write an essay in which you describe the waste that you see generated at your school, home, or job. Like Rogers, write your description in a way that will motivate people to do something about the problem. In your essay, use a quotation from Rogers’s essay. Make sure you document the quotation and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
2. **Working with Sources.** In 1986, the city of Philadelphia hired a company to dispose of waste from a city incinerator. Over thirteen thousand tons of waste — some of which was hazardous — was loaded onto a ship called the *Khian Sea*, which unsuccessfully tried to dispose of it. After two years, the cargo mysteriously disappeared. Go to Google Images and find several pictures of the *Khian Sea*. Then, write a description of the ship and its cargo. Make sure the thesis statement of your description clearly conveys your dominant impression. If you wish, you may insert one of the images you found into your essay. Make sure that you document the image and

include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)

3. Describe a place that has played an important role in your life. Include a narrative passage that conveys the place's significance to you.

Combining the Patterns

In paragraphs 9 and 10, Rogers includes a **definition** as well as a **process** description. Explain how these paragraphs help Rogers develop her description.

Thematic Connections

- “The Case against Air Conditioning” (page 344)
- “Environmentalism as Religion” (page 399)
- “On Dumpster Diving” (page 664)

Writing Assignments for Description

1. Choose a character from a book or movie who you think is interesting. Write a descriptive essay conveying what makes this character so special.
2. Several of the essays in this chapter deal with the way journeys change how the writers see themselves. For example, in “Once More to the Lake,” a visit to a campground forces E. B. White to confront his own mortality, and in “The Hidden Life of Garbage,” a visit to a landfill outside Morrisville, Pennsylvania, enables Heather Rogers to grasp the enormity of the task of disposing of garbage in the United States. Write an essay describing a place that you traveled to. Make sure that, in addition to describing the place, you explain how it has taught you something about yourself.
3. Locate some photographs of your relatives. Describe three of these pictures, including details that provide insight into the lives of the people you discuss. Use your descriptive passages to support a thesis about your family.
4. **Working with Sources.** Visit an art museum (or go to a museum site on the Web), and select a painting that interests you. Study it carefully, and then write an essay-length description of it. Before you write, decide how you will organize your details and whether you will write a subjective or an objective description. If possible, include a photograph of the painting in your essay. Be sure to document the photograph and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
5. Select an object you are familiar with, and write an objective description of it. Include a diagram.
6. Assume you are writing an email to someone in another country who knows little about life in the United States. Describe to this person something you consider typically American — for example, a baseball stadium or a food court in a shopping mall.
7. Visit your college library, and write a brochure in which you describe the reference area. Be specific, and select an organizing scheme before you begin your description. Your purpose is to acquaint students with some of the reference materials they will use. If possible, include a diagram that will help orient students to this section of the library.
8. Describe your neighborhood to a visitor who knows nothing about it. Include as much specific detail as you can.
9. After reading “Ground Zero,” write a description of a sight or scene that fascinated, surprised, or shocked you. Your description should explain why you were so deeply affected by what you saw.
10. Write an essay describing an especially frightening horror film. What specific sights and sounds make this film so horrifying? Include a thesis statement assessing the film’s success as a horror film. (Be careful not to simply summarize the plot of the film.)

Collaborative Activity for Description

Working in groups of three or four students, select a famous person — one you can reasonably expect your classmates to recognize. Then, work as a group to write a description of that individual, including as much physical detail as possible. (Avoid any details that will be an instant giveaway.) Give your description a general title — *politician*, *television star*, or *person in the news*, for example. Finally, have one person read the description aloud to the class, and see whether your classmates can guess the person's identity.

Cause and Effect

What Is Cause and Effect?

Process describes *how* something happens; **cause and effect** analyzes *why* something happens. Cause-and-effect essays examine causes, describe effects, or do both. In the following paragraph, journalist Tom Wicker considers the effects of a technological advance on a village in India.

Cause



Effects

Topic sentence

When a solar-powered water pump was provided for a well in India, the village headman took it over and sold the water, until stopped. The new liquid abundance attracted hordes of unwanted nomads. Village boys who had drawn water in buckets had nothing to do, and some became criminals. The gap between rich and poor widened, since the poor had no land to benefit from irrigation. Finally, village women broke the pump, so they could gather again around the well that had been the center of their social lives. Moral: technological advances have social, cultural, and economic consequences, often unanticipated.

Cause and effect, like narration, links situations and events together in time, with causes preceding effects. But causality involves more than sequence: cause-and-effect analysis explains why something happened — or is happening — and predicts what probably will happen.

Sometimes many different causes can be responsible for one effect. For example, as the following diagram illustrates, many elements may contribute to an individual's decision to leave his or her country of origin for the United States.

Causes

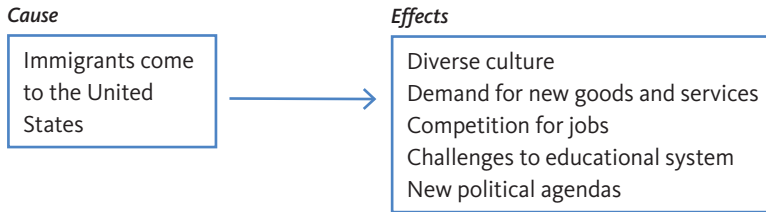
Political repression
Desire to further education
Desire to join family members
Desire for economic opportunity
Desire for religious freedom



Effect

Immigrants come to the United States

Similarly, a single cause can produce many different effects. Immigration, for instance, has had a variety of effects on the United States.



Using Cause and Effect

Of course, causal relationships are rarely as neat as the boxes above suggest; in fact, such relationships are often subtle and complex. As you examine situations that seem suited to cause-and-effect analysis, you will discover that most complex situations involve numerous causes and many different effects.

Consider the two examples that follow.

The Case of the Losing Team. Suppose a professional basketball team, recently stocked with the best players money can buy, has had a mediocre season. Because the individual players are talented and were successful under other coaches, fans blame the current coach for the team's losing streak and want him fired. But is the coach alone responsible? Maybe the inability of the players to function well as a team contributed to their poor performance. Perhaps some of the players are suffering from injuries, personal problems, or drug dependency. Or maybe the lack of support among fans has affected the team's morale. Clearly, other elements besides the new coach could have caused the losing streak. (And, of course, the team's losing streak might have any number of consequences, from declining attendance at games to the city's refusal to build a new arena.)

The Case of the Declining SAT Scores. For more than twenty years, from the 1960s to the 1980s, the college-board scores of high school seniors steadily declined, and educators began to look for causes.* The decline began soon after television became popular, and therefore many people concluded that the two events were connected. This idea is plausible

* More recently, with 2006 SAT scores showing their biggest decline since 1975 and the average SAT verbal scores falling five points, educators have continued to search for causes, including changes in the test itself and the fact that fewer students are taking the test more than once. (In 2009, average reading and writing scores declined by one point, while average math scores stayed the same.)

because children did seem to be reading less to watch television more, and reading comprehension is one of the chief skills the tests evaluate.

But many other elements might have contributed to the decline of test scores. During the same period, for example, many schools reduced the number of required courses and deemphasized traditional subjects and skills, such as reading. Adults were reading less than they used to, and perhaps they were not encouraging their children to read. Furthermore, during the 1960s and 1970s, many colleges changed their policies and admitted students who previously would not have qualified. These new admission standards encouraged students who would not have taken college boards in earlier years to take the tests. Therefore, the scores may have been lower because they measured the top third of high school seniors rather than the top fifth. In any case, the reason for the lower scores during that twenty-year period remains unclear. Perhaps television was the main cause after all, but nobody knows for sure. In such a case, it is easy — too easy — to claim a cause-and-effect relationship without the evidence to support it.

And just as the drop in scores may have had many causes, television watching may have had many effects. For instance, it may have made those same students better observers and listeners even if they did less well on standardized written tests. It may have encouraged them to have a national or even international outlook instead of a narrower local perspective. In other words, even if watching television did limit young people in some ways, it might also have expanded their horizons in other ways.

Remember, when you write about situations such as those described above, you need to give a balanced analysis. This means that you should try to consider all possible causes and effects, not just the most obvious ones or the first ones you think of.

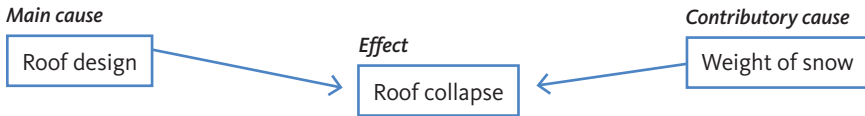
Understanding Main and Contributory Causes

Even when you have identified several causes of a particular effect, one — the *main cause* — is always more important than the others, the *contributory causes*. Understanding the distinction between the **main** (most important) **cause** and the **contributory** (less important) **causes** is vital for planning a cause-and-effect paper because once you identify the main cause, you can emphasize it in your paper and downplay the other causes. How, then, can you tell which cause is most important? Sometimes the main cause is obvious, but often it is not, as the following example shows.

The Case of the Hartford Roof Collapse. During one winter a number of years ago, an unusually large amount of snow accumulated on the roof of the Civic Center Auditorium in Hartford, Connecticut, and the roof fell in. Newspapers reported that the weight of the snow had caused the collapse, and they were partly right. Other buildings, however, had not been

flattened by the snow, so the main cause seemed to lie elsewhere. Insurance investigators eventually determined that the roof design, not the weight of the snow (which was a contributory cause), was the main cause of the collapse.

These cause-and-effect relationships are shown in this diagram:



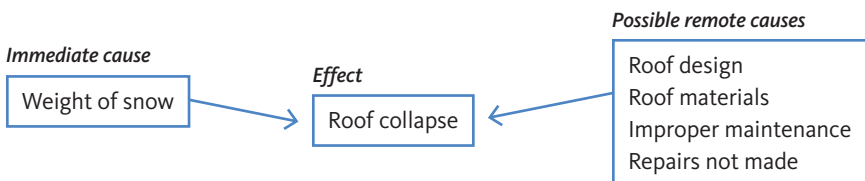
Because the main cause is not always the most obvious one, you should be sure to consider the significance of each cause very carefully as you plan your essay – and to continue to evaluate the importance of each cause as you write and revise.

Understanding Immediate and Remote Causes

Another important distinction is the difference between an immediate cause and a remote cause. An **immediate cause** closely precedes an effect and is therefore relatively easy to recognize. A **remote cause** is less obvious, perhaps because it involves something in the past or far away. Assuming that the most obvious cause is always the most important can be dangerous as well as shortsighted.

Reconsidering the Hartford Roof Collapse. Most people agreed that the snow was the immediate, or most obvious, cause of the roof collapse. But further study by insurance investigators suggested remote causes that were not so apparent. The design of the roof was the most important remote cause of the collapse, but other remote causes were also examined. Perhaps the materials used in the roof's construction were partly to blame. Maybe maintenance crews had not done their jobs properly, or necessary repairs had not been made. If you were the insurance investigator analyzing the causes of this event, you would want to assess all possible contributing factors rather than just the most obvious. If you did not consider the remote as well as the immediate causes, you would reach an oversimplified and perhaps incorrect conclusion.

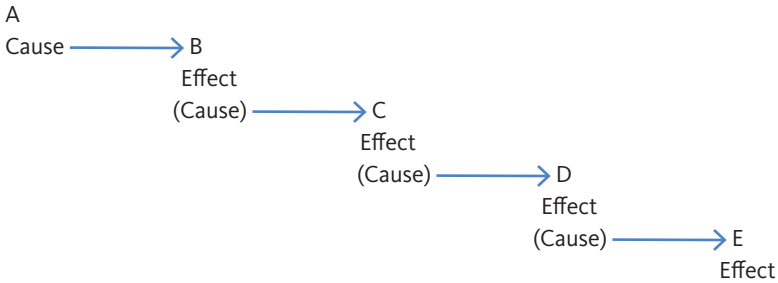
This diagram shows the cause-and-effect relationships just summarized.



Remember, remote causes can be extremely important. In the roof-collapse situation, as we have seen, a remote cause — the roof design — was actually the main cause of the accident.

Understanding Causal Chains

Sometimes an effect can also be a cause. This is true in a **causal chain**, where A causes B, B causes C, C causes D, and so on, as shown here.



In causal chains, the result of one action is the cause of another. Leaving out any link in the chain, or failing to put any link in its proper order, destroys the logic and continuity of the chain.

A simple example of a causal chain is the recent suggestion by a group of retired generals that global warming might be a threat to U.S. national security. According to these generals, global warming causes worldwide climate changes, such as droughts, which in turn create a refugee crisis as people leave their homelands in search of clean water. The resulting refugee camps, the generals claim, become a breeding ground for terrorists, and it is these terrorists who threaten our nation's security.

Here is another example of a causal chain.

The Case of the Disappearing Bicycle. In the past thirty-five years, the bicycle as a form of transportation for children has become increasingly rare, with fewer than one percent of children now riding bicycles to school. In addition, fewer children ride bicycles for recreation. Causes cited for this decline include the absence of sidewalks in many newer suburban communities, parents' rising fears about crime and traffic accidents, the rise in the number of students who schedule back-to-back after-school activities (perhaps due in part to the increased number of households with both parents working), the growing popularity of social media and video games, and the increased availability of after-school jobs for teenagers (who often need cars, not bikes, to get to work). The decreasing number of children who ride bikes has contributed to a corresponding steady decline, since the 1970s, in the sale of bicycles.

As a result of the decline in bicycle sales, bicycle thefts have decreased sharply, and bicycle deaths involving children under sixteen have also dropped dramatically (although this is due in part to the increased use of

helmets). However, the number of American children who are obese has doubled since the mid-1980s — in part because children get less and less exercise. So, factors such as fewer sidewalks and more working teenagers may have led to a decline in bicycle sales, which in turn seems to have had a far-reaching impact on children's health.

If your analysis of a situation reveals a causal chain, this discovery can be useful as you plan your essay. The very operation of a causal chain suggests an organizational pattern for a paper, and following the chain helps you to discuss items in their logical order. Be careful, however, to keep your emphasis on the causal connections and not to lapse into narration.

Avoiding *Post Hoc* Reasoning

When developing a cause-and-effect paper, you should not assume that just because event A *precedes* event B, event A has *caused* event B. This illogical assumption, called ***post hoc reasoning***, equates a chronological sequence with causality. When you fall into this trap — assuming, for instance, that you failed an exam because a black cat crossed your path the day before — you are mistaking coincidence for causality.

Consider a classic example of *post hoc* reasoning.

The Case of the Magical Maggots. Until the late nineteenth century, many scientists accepted the notion of spontaneous generation — that is, they believed living things could arise directly from nonliving matter. To support their beliefs, they pointed to specific situations. For instance, they observed that maggots, the larvae of the housefly, seemed to arise directly from the decaying flesh of dead animals.

These scientists were confusing sequence with causality, assuming that because the presence of decaying meat preceded the appearance of maggots, the two were connected in a causal relationship. In fact, because the dead animals were exposed to the air, flies were free to lay eggs in the animals' bodies, and these eggs hatched into maggots. Therefore, the living maggots were not a direct result of the presence of nonliving matter. Although these scientists were applying the best technology and scientific theory of their time, hindsight reveals that their conclusions were not valid.

Here is a more recent example of *post hoc* reasoning.

The Case of the Female Centenarians. Several years ago, medical researchers published findings reporting that female centenarians — women who reached the age of one hundred — were four times as likely to have given birth when they were past forty as were women in a control group who died at the age of seventy-three. Researchers saw no causal connection between childbirth after forty and long life, suggesting only that the centenarians might have been predisposed to live longer because they reached

menopause later than the other women. Local television newscasts and tabloid newspapers, however, misinterpreted the study's implications, presenting the relationship between late childbearing and long life as a causal one. In a vivid example of *post hoc* reasoning, one promotional spot for a local television newscast proclaimed, "Having kids late in life can help you live longer."

In your writing, as well as in your observations, it is neither logical nor fair to assume that a causal relationship exists unless clear, strong evidence supports the connection. When you revise a cause-and-effect paper, make sure you have not confused words such as *because*, *therefore*, and *consequently* (words that indicate a causal relationship) with words such as *then*, *next*, *subsequently*, *later*, and *afterward* (words that indicate a chronological relationship). When you use a word like *because*, you are signaling to readers that you are telling *why* something happened; when you use a word like *later*, you are only showing *when* it happened.

The ability to identify and analyze cause-and-effect relationships; to distinguish causes from effects and recognize causal chains; and to distinguish immediate from remote, main from contributory, and logical from illogical causes are all skills that will improve your writing. Understanding the nature of various cause-and-effect relationships will help you decide when and how to use this pattern in a paper.

Planning a Cause-and-Effect Essay

After you have sorted out the cause-and-effect relationships you will write about, you are ready to plan your paper. You have three basic options — to discuss causes, to discuss effects, or to discuss both causes and effects. Often your assignment will suggest which of these options to use. Here are a few likely topics for cause-and-effect treatment.

Focus on finding
causes

Discuss the factors that contributed to the declining population of state mental hospitals in the 1960s. (social work paper)

Identify some possible causes of collective obsessive behavior. (psychology exam)

Focus on describing
or predicting effects

Evaluate the probable effects of moving elementary school children from a highly structured classroom to a relatively open classroom. (education paper)

Discuss the impact of World War I on two of Ernest Hemingway's characters. (literature exam)

Focus on both causes
and effects

The 1840s were volatile years in Europe. Choose one social, political, or economic event that occurred during those years, analyze its causes, and briefly note how the event influenced later developments in European history. (history exam)

Developing a Thesis Statement

Of course, a cause-and-effect essay usually does more than just enumerate causes or effects; more often, it presents and supports a particular thesis. For example, an economics paper treating the major effects of the Vietnam War on the U.S. economy could be just a straightforward presentation of factual information — an attempt to inform readers of the war's economic impact. It is more likely, however, that the paper would not just list the war's effects but also indicate their significance. In fact, cause-and-effect analysis often requires you to judge various factors so that you can assess their relative significance.

When you formulate a **thesis statement**, be sure it identifies the relationships among the specific causes or effects you will discuss. This thesis statement should tell your readers three things: the issues you plan to consider, the position you will take, and whether your emphasis is on causes, effects, or both. Your thesis statement may also indicate explicitly or implicitly the cause or effect you consider most important and the order in which you will present your points.

Arranging Causes and Effects

When deciding on the sequence in which you will present causes or effects, you have several options. One option, of course, is chronological order: you can present causes or effects in the order in which they occurred. Another option is to introduce the main cause first and then the contributory causes — or you can do just the opposite. If you want to stress positive consequences, begin by briefly discussing the negative ones; if you plan to emphasize negative results, summarize the less important positive effects first. Still another possibility is to begin by dismissing any events that were *not* causes and then explain what the real causes were. (This method is especially effective if you think your readers are likely to jump to *post hoc* conclusions.) Finally, you can begin with the most obvious causes or effects and move on to more subtle factors — and then to your analysis and conclusion.

Using Transitions

Cause-and-effect essays rely on clear transitions — *the first cause, the second cause; one result, another result* — to distinguish causes from effects and to

help move readers through the discussion. In essays that analyze complex causal relationships, transitions are even more important because they can help readers distinguish main from contributory causes (*the most important cause, another cause*) and immediate from remote causes (*the most obvious cause, a less apparent cause*). Transitions are also essential in a causal chain, where they can help readers sort out the sequence (*then, next*) as well as the causal relationships (*because, as a result, for this reason*). A more complete list of transitions appears on page 57.

Structuring a Cause-and-Effect Essay

Finding Causes

Suppose you are planning the social work paper mentioned earlier: “Discuss the factors that contributed to the declining population of state mental hospitals in the 1960s.” Your assignment specifies an effect — the declining population of state mental hospitals — and asks you to discuss possible causes, which might include the following:

- An increasing acceptance of mental illness in our society
- Prohibitive costs of in-patient care
- Increasing numbers of mental health professionals, which made it possible to treat patients outside of hospitals

Many health professionals, however, believe that the most important cause was the development and use of psychotropic drugs, such as chlorpromazine (Thorazine), which can alter behavior. To emphasize this cause in your paper, you could formulate the following thesis statement.

Less important causes

Effect

Most important cause

Although society’s increasing acceptance of the mentally ill, the high cost of in-patient care, and the rise in the number of mental health professionals were all influential in reducing the population of state mental hospitals in the 1960s, the most important cause of this decline was the development and use of psychotropic drugs.

This thesis statement fully prepares your readers for your essay. It identifies the points you will consider, and it reveals your position — your assessment of the relative significance of the causes you identify. It states the less important causes first and indicates their secondary importance with *although*. In the body of your essay, the less important causes would come first so that the essay could gradually build up to the most convincing material. An informal outline for your paper might look like the one that follows.

SAMPLE OUTLINE: Finding Causes

Introduction:	Thesis statement — Although society’s increasing acceptance of the mentally ill, the high cost of in-patient care, and the rise in the number of mental health professionals were all influential in reducing the population of state mental hospitals in the 1960s, the most important cause of this decline was the development and use of psychotropic drugs.
First cause:	Increasing acceptance of the mentally ill
Second cause:	High cost of in-patient care
Third cause:	Rise in the number of mental health professionals
Fourth (and most important) cause:	Development and use of psychotropic drugs
Conclusion:	Restatement of thesis or summary of key points

Describing or Predicting Effects

Suppose you were planning the education paper mentioned earlier: “Evaluate the probable effects of moving elementary school children from a highly structured classroom to a relatively open classroom.” Here you would focus on effects rather than on causes. After brainstorming and deciding which specific points to discuss, you might formulate this thesis statement.

Cause	Moving children from a highly structured classroom to a relatively open one is desirable because it is likely to encourage
Effects	more independent play, more flexibility in forming friendship groups, and, ultimately, more creativity.

This thesis statement clearly tells readers the stand you will take and the main points you will consider in your essay. The thesis also clearly indicates that these points are *effects* of the open classroom. After introducing the cause, your essay would treat these three effects in the order they are presented in the thesis statement, building up to the most important point. An informal outline of your paper might look like this.

SAMPLE OUTLINE: Describing or Predicting Effects

Introduction:	Thesis statement — Moving children from a highly structured classroom to a relatively open one is desirable because it is likely to encourage more independent play, more flexibility in forming friendship groups, and, ultimately, more creativity.
First effect:	More independent play
Second effect:	More flexibility in forming friendship groups
Third (and most important) effect:	More creativity
Conclusion:	Restatement of thesis or summary of key points

Revising a Cause-and-Effect Essay

When you revise a cause-and-effect essay, consider the items on the revision checklist on page 68. In addition, pay special attention to the items on the following checklist, which apply specifically to cause-and-effect essays.



REVISION CHECKLIST

Cause and Effect

- Does your assignment call for a discussion of causes, of effects, or of both causes and effects?
- Does your essay have a clearly stated thesis that indicates whether you will focus on causes, effects, or both?
- Have you considered all possible causes and all possible effects?
- Have you distinguished between the main (most important) cause and the contributory (less important) causes?
- Have you distinguished between immediate and remote causes?
- Have you identified a causal chain in your reasoning?
- Have you avoided *post hoc* reasoning?
- Have you used transitional words and phrases to show how the causes and effects you discuss are related?

Editing a Cause-and-Effect Essay

When you edit your cause-and-effect essay, follow the guidelines on the editing checklists on pages 85, 88, and 90. In addition, focus on the grammar, mechanics, and punctuation issues that are particularly relevant to cause-and-effect essays. Two of these issues — avoiding faulty “the reason is because” constructions and using *affect* and *effect* correctly — are discussed here.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

Avoiding “The reason is because”; Using *Affect* and *Effect* Correctly

Avoiding “the reason is because” When you discuss causes and effects, you may find yourself using the phrase “the reason is.” If you follow this phrase with *because* (“the reason is *because*”), you will create an error.

The word *because* means “for the reason that.” Therefore, it is redundant to say “the reason is because” (which literally means “the reason is for the reason that”). You can correct this error by substituting *that* for *because* (“the reason is *that*”).

INCORRECT: Lawrence Otis Graham believes that one reason he did not sit with other African-American students in the cafeteria was because he was afraid of losing his white friends (350).

CORRECT: Lawrence Otis Graham believes that one reason he did not sit with other African-American students in the cafeteria was that he was afraid of losing his white friends (350).

Using *Affect* and *Effect* Correctly When you write a cause-and-effect essay, you will probably use the words *affect* and *effect* quite often. For this reason, it is important that you know the difference between *affect* and *effect*.

- *Affect*, usually a verb, means “to influence.”

Linda M. Hasselstrom believes that carrying a gun has affected her life in a positive way (354).

- *Effect*, usually a noun, means “a result.”

Linda M. Hasselstrom believes that carrying a gun has had a positive effect on her life (354).

NOTE: *Effect* can also be a verb meaning “to bring about” (“She worked hard to effect change in the community”).

For more practice in avoiding faulty constructions and commonly confused words, visit the resources for Chapter 10 at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.



EDITING CHECKLIST

Cause and Effect

- Have you used verb tenses correctly to distinguish among events that happened earlier, at the same time, and later?
- Have you placed a comma after every dependent clause introduced by *because* (“Because the rally was so crowded, we left early”) but not used a comma before a dependent clause introduced by *because* (“We left early because the rally was so crowded”)?
- Have you used “the reason is that” (not “the reason is because”)?
- Have you used *affect* and *effect* correctly?

A STUDENT WRITER: Cause and Effect

The following midterm exam, written for a history class, analyzes both the causes and the effects of the famine that occurred in Ireland during the 1840s. Notice how the writer, Evelyn Pellicane, concentrates on causes but also discusses briefly the effects of this tragedy, just as the exam question directs.

Question: The 1840s were volatile years in Europe. Choose one social, political, or economic event that occurred during those years, analyze its causes, and briefly note how the event influenced later developments in European history.

The Irish Famine, 1845-1849

Thesis statement

The Irish famine, which brought hardship and tragedy to Ireland during the 1840s, was caused and prolonged by four basic factors: the failure of the potato crop, the landlord-tenant system, errors in government policy, and the long-standing prejudice of the British toward Ireland. 1

First cause

The immediate cause of the famine was the failure of the potato crop. In 1845, potato disease struck the crop, and potatoes rotted in the ground. The 1846 crop also failed, and before long people were eating weeds. The 1847 crop was healthy, but there were not enough potatoes to go around, and in 1848 the blight struck again, leading to more and more evictions of tenants by landlords. 2

Second cause

The tenants' position on the land had never been very secure. Most had no leases and could be turned out by their landlords at any time. If a tenant owed rent, he was evicted—or, worse, put in prison, leaving his family to starve. The threat of prison caused many tenants to leave their land; those who could leave Ireland did so, sometimes with money provided by their landlords. Some landlords did try to take care of their tenants, but most did not. Many were absentee landlords who spent their rent money abroad. 3

Third cause

Government policy errors, although not an immediate cause of the famine, played an important role in creating an unstable economy and perpetuating starvation. In 1846, the government decided not to continue selling corn, as it had during the first year of the famine, claiming that low-cost purchases of corn by Ireland had paralyzed British trade by interfering with free enterprise. Therefore, 1846 saw a starving population, angry demonstrations, and panic; even those with money were unable to buy food. Still, the government insisted that if it sent food to Ireland, prices would rise in the rest of the United Kingdom and that this would be unfair to hardworking English and Scots. As a result, no food was sent. Throughout the years of the famine, the British government aggravated an already grave situation: they did nothing to improve agricultural operations, to help people adjust to another crop, to distribute seeds, or to reform the landlord-tenant system that made the tenants' position so insecure. 4

Fourth cause

At the root of this poor government policy was the long-standing British prejudice against the Irish. Hostility between the two countries went back some six hundred years, and the British were simply not about to inconvenience themselves to save 5

the Irish. When the Irish so desperately needed grain to replace the damaged potatoes, it was clear that grain had to be imported from England. This meant, however, that the Corn Laws, which had been enacted to keep the price of British corn high by taxing imported grain, had to be repealed. The British were unwilling to repeal the Corn Laws. Even when they did supply cornmeal, they made no attempt to explain to the Irish how to cook this unfamiliar food. Moreover, the British government was determined to make Ireland pay for its own poor, so it forced the collection of taxes. Since many landlords could not collect the tax money, they were forced to evict their tenants. The British government's callous and indifferent treatment of the Irish has been called genocide.

Effects

As a result of this devastating famine, the population of Ireland was reduced from about nine million to about six and one-half million. During the famine years, men roamed the streets looking for work, begging when they found none. Epidemics of "famine fever" and dysentery reduced the population drastically. The most important historical result of the famine, however, was the massive immigration to the United States, Canada, and Great Britain of poor, unskilled people who had to struggle to fit into a skilled economy and who brought with them a deep-seated hatred of the British. (This same hatred remained strong in Ireland itself—so strong that during World War II, Ireland, then independent, remained neutral rather than coming to England's aid.) Irish immigrants faced slums, fever epidemics, joblessness, and hostility—even anti-Catholic and anti-Irish riots—in Boston, New York, London, Glasgow, and Quebec. In Ireland itself, poverty and discontent continued, and by 1848 those emigrating from Ireland included a more highly skilled class of farmers, the ones Ireland needed to recover and to survive. 6

Conclusion (includes restatement of thesis)

The Irish famine, one of the great tragedies of the nineteenth century, was a natural disaster compounded by the insensitivity of the British government and the archaic agricultural system of Ireland. Although the deaths that resulted depleted Ireland's resources even more, the men and women who immigrated to other countries permanently enriched those nations. 7

Points for Special Attention

Structure. This is a relatively long essay; if it were not so clearly organized, it would be difficult to follow. Because the essay was to focus primar-

ily on causes, Evelyn first introduces the effect — the famine itself — and then considers its causes. After she examines the causes, she moves on to the results of the famine, treating the most important result last. In this essay, then, the famine is first treated as an effect and then, toward the end, as a cause. In fact, it is the central link in a causal chain.

Evelyn devotes one paragraph to her introduction and one to each cause; she sums up the famine's results in a separate paragraph and devotes the final paragraph to her conclusion. (Depending on a particular paper's length and complexity, more — or less — than one paragraph may be devoted to each cause or effect.) An informal outline for her paper might look like this:

The Irish Famine

Introduction (including thesis statement)

First cause: Failure of the potato crop

Second cause: The landlord-tenant system

Third cause: Errors in government policy

Fourth cause: British prejudice

Results of the famine

Conclusion

Because Evelyn saw all the causes as important and interrelated, she did not present them in order of increasing importance. Instead, she begins with the immediate cause of the famine — the failure of the potato crop — and then digs more deeply until she arrives at the most remote cause, British prejudice. The immediate cause is also the main (most important) cause; the other situations had existed before the famine began.

Transitions. Because Evelyn considers a series of relationships as well as an intricate causal chain, the cause-and-effect relationships in this essay are both subtle and complex. Throughout the essay, many words suggest cause-and-effect connections: *brought*, *caused*, *leading to*, *therefore*, *as a result*, *so*, *since*, and the like. These words help readers sort out the causal connections.

Answering an Exam Question. Before planning and writing her answer, Evelyn read the exam question carefully. She saw that it asked for both causes and effects but that its wording directed her to spend more time on causes (“analyze”) than on effects (“briefly note”), so she organized her discussion to conform to these directions. In addition, she indicated *explicitly* which were the causes (“government policy . . . played an important role”) and which were the effects (“The most important historical result”).

Evelyn's purpose was to convey factual information and, in doing so, to demonstrate her understanding of the course material. Rather than waste her limited time choosing a clever opening strategy or making elaborate attempts to engage her audience, she began her essay with a direct statement of her thesis.

Working with Sources. Evelyn was obviously influenced by outside sources; the ideas in the essay are not completely her own. Because this was an exam, however, and because the instructor expected that students would base their essays on class notes and assigned readings, Evelyn was not required to document her sources.

Focus on Revision

Because this essay was written as an exam answer, Evelyn had no time — and no need — to revise it further. If she had been preparing this assignment outside of class, however, she might have done more. For example, she could have added a more arresting opening, such as a brief eyewitness account of the famine's effects. Her conclusion — appropriately brief and straightforward for an exam answer — could also have been developed further, perhaps with the addition of information about the nation's eventual recovery. Finally, adding statistics, quotations by historians, or a brief summary of Irish history before the famine could have further enriched the essay.



PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: Cause and Effect

1. Paraphrase the essay's thesis. Is it explicitly stated? Should it be?
2. Does the essay focus on causes, effects, or both? Does the thesis statement clearly identify this focus? If not, how should the thesis statement be revised?
3. Does the writer consider *all* relevant causes or effects? Are any key causes or effects omitted? Are any irrelevant causes or effects included?
4. Make an informal outline of the essay. What determines the order of the causes or effects? Is this the most effective order? If not, what revisions do you suggest?
5. List the transitional words and phrases used to indicate causal connections. Are any additional transitions needed? If so, where?
6. Does the writer use *post hoc* reasoning? Point out any examples of illogical reasoning.
7. Are more examples or details needed to help readers understand causal connections? If so, where?
8. Do you agree with the writer's conclusions? Why or why not?
9. Has the writer used any "the reason is because" constructions? If so, suggest revisions.
10. Are *affect* and *effect* used correctly? Point out any errors.

All the selections that follow focus on cause-and-effect relationships. Some readings focus on causes, others on effects. The first selection, a visual text, is followed by questions designed to illustrate how cause and effect can operate in visual form.

LOUIS REQUENA

Major League Baseball Brawl (Photo)



• • •

Reading Images

1. Study the photo above. What might have caused the situation on the field? Consider remote as well as immediate causes.

continued

2. What outcomes might you expect from this fight? Consider the effects on the players on the field, on the players waiting in the dugout, and on the fans in the stands.
3. Consider the fight on the field as part of a causal chain. Diagram that chain of events, using arrows to point from one event to the next.

Journal Entry

Write a paragraph suggesting ways to prevent situations such as the one shown in the picture. For example, would high fines deter players from losing their tempers?

Thematic Connections

- “My Field of Dreams” (page 103)
- “Let Steroids into the Hall of Fame” (page 253)
- “Who Killed Benny Paret?” (page 339)

The Case against Air Conditioning

Stan Cox (b. 1955) writes regularly about sustainability, ecology, and agriculture. After earning a Ph.D. from Iowa State University in 1983, he spent thirteen years working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a geneticist. He is now a senior scientist at the Land Institute, an agricultural research and policy organization in Salina, Kansas. His essays and opinion columns have appeared in the *Baltimore Sun*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Counterpunch.org*, *Progressive Populist*, and many other outlets. Cox is the author of *Sick Planet: Corporate Food and Medicine* (2008) and *Losing Our Cool: Uncomfortable Truths about Our Air-Conditioned World (and Finding New Ways to Get through the Summer)* (2010).

Background on air conditioning In the opening pages of Harper Lee's acclaimed 1961 novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the narrator says of her childhood in a small southern town, "Somehow, it was hotter then. . . ." She may have been reflecting on the changes brought about by air conditioning. The first modern air conditioner was built in 1903 by Willis Carrier, an engineer who created a device that chilled and dehumidified air by forcing it over coolant-filled coils. For the first decades of the twentieth century, air conditioning mostly served industrial purposes, cooling factories, textile mills, and printing plants. Gradually, the technology spread to hospitals, hotels, and movie theaters. The boom in residential air-conditioning came with the development of smaller units after World War II: by 1953, over a million had been sold. The invention had an enormous demographic effect on the United States: the spread of air conditioning in the 1960s and 1970s made possible the large shifts in people — and businesses — to the American "Sun Belt."

Washington didn't grind to a sweaty halt last week under triple-digit 1
temperatures. People didn't even slow down. Instead, the three-day,
100-plus-degree, record-shattering heat wave prompted Washingtonians
to crank up their favorite humidity-reducing, electricity-bill-busting,
fluorocarbon-filled appliance: the air conditioner.

This isn't smart. In a country that's among the world's highest green- 2
house-gas emitters, air conditioning is one of the worst power-guzzlers.
The energy required to air-condition American homes and retail spaces has
doubled since the early 1990s. Turning buildings into refrigerators burns
fossil fuels, which emits greenhouse gases, which raises global tempera-
tures, which creates a need for — you guessed it — more air-conditioning.

A.C.'s obvious public-health benefits during severe heat waves do not 3
justify its lavish use in everyday life for months on end. Less than half a
century ago, America thrived with only the spottiest use of air condition-
ing. It could again. While central air will always be needed in facilities such

as hospitals, archives, and cooling centers for those who are vulnerable to heat, what would an otherwise A.C.-free Washington look like?

“Less than half a century ago, America thrived with only the spottiest use of air conditioning. It could again.”

At Work

In a world without air conditioning, a warmer, more flexible, more relaxed workplace helps make summer a time to slow down again. Three-digit temperatures prompt siestas. Code-orange days mean offices are closed. Shorter summer business hours and month-long closings — common in pre-air-conditioned America — return.

Business suits are out, for both sexes. And with the right to open a window, office employees no longer have to carry sweaters or space heaters to work in the summer. After a long absence, ceiling fans, window fans, and desk fans (and, for that matter, paperweights) take back the American office.

Best of all, Washington’s biggest business — government — is transformed. In 1978, 50 years after air conditioning was installed in Congress, *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker noted that, pre-A.C., Congress was forced to adjourn to avoid Washington’s torturous summers, and “the nation enjoyed a respite from the promulgation of more laws, the depredations of lobbyists, the hatching of new schemes for Federal expansion and, of course, the cost of maintaining a government running at full blast.”

Post-A.C., Congress again adjourns for the summer, giving “tea parties” the smaller government they seek. During unseasonably warm spring and fall days, hearings are held under canopies on the Capitol lawn. What better way to foster open government and prompt politicians to focus on climate change?

At Home

Homeowners from Ward 8 to the Palisades* pry open double-hung windows that were painted shut decades ago. In the air-conditioned age, fear of crime was often cited by people reluctant to open their homes to night breezes. In Washington, as in most of the world’s warm cities, window grilles (not “bars,” please) are now standard.

In renovation and new construction alike, high ceilings, better cross-ventilation, whole-house fans, screened porches, basements, and white “cool roofs” to reflect solar rays become de rigueur. Home utility bills plummet.

* Eds. note — *Ward 8 to the Palisades*: Two neighborhoods in Washington, DC.

Families unplug as many heat-generating appliances as possible. Forget clothes dryers — post-A.C. neighborhoods are crisscrossed with clotheslines. The hot stove is abandoned for the grill, and dinner is eaten on the porch.

Around Town

Saying goodbye to A.C. means saying hello to the world. With more people spending more time outdoors — particularly in the late afternoon and evening, when temperatures fall more quickly outside than they do inside — neighborhoods see a boom in spontaneous summertime socializing.

Rather than cowering alone in chilly home-entertainment rooms, neighbors get to know one another. Because there are more people outside, streets in high-crime areas become safer. As a result of all this, a strange thing happens: Deaths from heat decline. Elderly people no longer die alone inside sweltering apartments, too afraid to venture outside for help and too isolated to be noticed. Instead, people look out for one another during heat waves, checking in on their most vulnerable neighbors.

Children — and others — take to bikes and scooters, because of the cooling effect of air movement. Calls for more summer school and even year-round school cease. Our kids don't need more time inside, everyone agrees; they need the shady playgrounds and water sprinklers that spring up in every neighborhood.

"Green roofs" of grass, ivy, and even food crops sprout on the flat tops of government and commercial buildings around the city, including the White House. These layers of soil and vegetation (on top of a crucially leak-proof surface) insulate interiors from the pounding sun, while water from the plants' leaves provides evaporative cooling. More trees than ever appear in both private and public spaces.

And the Mall is reborn as the National Grove.

• • •

Comprehension

1. What does Cox think is wrong with air conditioning?
2. According to Cox, what would be the results of a largely "A.C.-free Washington" (3)? Does the scenario he outlines apply only to Washington, DC? Only to urban areas? Does it apply to other parts of the country as well?
3. Beginning in paragraph 4, Cox discusses the positive effects of reducing the use of air conditioning. What negative effects does he ignore?
4. Aside from "hospitals, archives, and cooling centers for those who are vulnerable to heat" (3), what other facilities and groups do you think need air conditioning?

5. What does Cox mean in paragraph 5 when he says that the end of air-conditioning will bring paperweights back to American offices?

Purpose and Audience

1. When Cox's article was published, during a record-breaking national heat wave, he received more than sixty pages of angry emails, including at least one death threat. Why do you suppose his essay generated such strong reactions?
2. What specific event or situation prompted Cox to write this essay? What other, less immediate causes might have inspired him?
3. Cox states his thesis in the first sentence of paragraph 3: "A.C.'s obvious public-health benefits during severe heat waves do not justify its lavish use in everyday life for months on end." Do you agree? How does his use of the word *lavish* reveal his bias? Does this word weaken his thesis?
4. In paragraph 6, Cox quotes Russell Baker. What does this quotation add to his essay?
5. Do you think Cox is really trying to persuade readers to live in a world without air conditioning, or do you think he has some other, less extreme purpose in mind?

Style and Structure

1. Does this essay focus on causes or on effects? What specific words does Cox use to indicate this focus?
2. In his discussion of a future air-conditioning-free environment, Cox uses present tense (for example, "Three-digit temperatures *prompt* siestas," paragraph 4). Why? What other tense could he have used? Do you think he made the right choice?
3. Paragraph 12 describes a **causal chain**. Diagram this causal chain. What other causal chains can you identify in this essay?
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of Cox's one-sentence conclusion. Does it make sense to close the essay this way? Is it consistent in tone and content with the discussion that precedes it?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

lavish (3)	de rigueur (9)
depredations (6)	plummet (9)
2. Cox uses many hyphenated compounds as adjectives to modify nouns — for example, "month-long closings" (4). Identify these compounds, and then identify the nouns they modify. Try to substitute single-word adjectives for these compound modifiers.

Journal Entry

Do you think Cox is overly optimistic about the “good old days” before air conditioning was widely available? Explain.

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** Cox’s essay focuses on the positive effects of drastically reducing the use of air conditioning. Write an essay in which you make a case for the continued high use of air conditioning, pointing out the *negative* effects of the adjustments Cox describes. Be sure to document your references to Cox’s essay and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
2. Write an essay called “The Case against Air Conditioning on Campus.” In your essay, describe the positive effects of reducing or eliminating air conditioning in your school’s classrooms, library, residence halls, labs, and so on.
3. Imagine you have just moved to your first air-conditioned residence after years of suffering without it. Write an essay explaining how air conditioning has changed your life.

Combining the Patterns

Cox’s essay is an **argument**. Does he identify and refute opposing arguments here? Should he do so? He supports the thesis of his argument with **exemplification**. Does he include enough examples? Are all his examples relevant?

Thematic Connections

- “My Mother Never Worked” (page 121)
- “Once More to the Lake” (page 194)
- “Environmentalism as Religion” (page 399)

The “Black Table” Is Still There

Lawrence Otis Graham was born in 1962 into one of the few African-American families then living in an upper-middle-class community in Westchester County, near New York City. A graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School, Graham works as a corporate attorney in Manhattan and teaches at Fordham University. He is the author of some dozen books, most recently *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class* (1999) and *The Senator and the Socialite: The True Story of America's First Black Dynasty* (2007). The following essay, originally published in the *New York Times* in 1991, is included in Graham's 1995 essay collection, *Member of the Club: Reflections on Life in a Racially Polarized World*.

Background on school segregation In “The ‘Black Table’ Is Still There,” Graham returns to his largely white junior high school and discovers to his dismay how little has changed since the 1970s. Since the 1950s, the United States government has strongly supported integration of public schools. For example, the Supreme Court in 1954 found segregation of public schools unconstitutional; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 required public school systems to implement integration programs; and in 1971, the Supreme Court upheld court-ordered busing as a means of achieving integration. The results of these policies were dramatic. From the mid-1960s to 1972, the number of African-American students attending desegregated schools jumped from 12 percent to 44 percent. By the 1990s, however, this had begun to change as the Supreme Court began to lift desegregation orders in response to local school boards’ promises to desegregate voluntarily through magnet schools and the like. A study published in 2003 showed that two-thirds of African-American students attend schools that are predominantly minority and more than 15 percent attend schools that are 99 to 100 percent minority, a significant rise since 1989. Ironically, as Graham observes, when students are given the choice, self-segregation seems to be the norm.

During a recent visit to my old junior high school in Westchester 1
County, I came upon something that I never expected to see again, something that was a source of fear and dread for three hours each school morning of my early adolescence: the all-black lunch table in the cafeteria of my predominantly white suburban junior high school.

As I look back on twenty-seven years of often being the first and only 2
black person integrating such activities and institutions as the college newspaper, the high school tennis team, summer music camps, our all-white suburban neighborhood, my eating club at Princeton, or my private social club at Harvard Law School, the one scenario that puzzled me the most then and now is the all-black lunch table.

Why was it there? Why did the black kids separate themselves? What 3
did the table say about the integration that was supposedly going on in
homerooms and gym classes? What did it say about the black kids? The
white kids? What did it say about me when I refused to sit there, day after
day, for three years?

Each afternoon, at 12:03 P.M., after the fourth period ended, I found 4
myself among six hundred 12-, 13-, and 14-year-olds who marched into the
brightly-lit cafeteria and dashed for a seat at one of the twenty-seven blue
formica lunch tables.

No matter who I walked in with — usually a white friend — no matter 5
what mood I was in, there was one thing that was certain: I would not sit
at the black table.

I would never consider sitting at the black table. 6

What was wrong with me? What was I afraid of? 7

I would like to think that my decision was a heroic one, made in order 8
to express my solidarity with the theories of integration that my commu-
nity was espousing. But I was just twelve at the time, and there was nothing
heroic in my actions.

I avoided the black table for a very simple reason: I was afraid that by 9
sitting at the black table I'd lose all my white friends. I thought that by sit-
ting there I'd be making a racist, anti-white statement.

Is that what the all-black table means? Is it a rejection of white people? 10
I no longer think so.

At the time, I was angry that there was a black lunch table. I believed 11
that the black kids were the reason why other kids didn't mix more. I was
ready to believe that their self-segregation was the cause of white bigotry.

Ironically, I even believed this after my best friend (who was white) told 12
me I probably shouldn't come to his bar mitzvah because I'd be the only
black and people would feel uncomfortable. I even believed this after my
Saturday afternoon visit, at age ten, to a private country club pool prompted
incensed white parents to pull their kids from the pool in terror.

In the face of this blatantly racist (anti-black) behavior I still somehow 13
managed to blame only the black kids for being the barrier to integration
in my school and my little world. What was I thinking?

I realize now how wrong I was. During that same time, there were at 14
least two tables of athletes, an Italian table, a Jewish girls' table, a Jewish
boys' table (where I usually sat), a table of kids who were into heavy metal
music and smoking pot, a table of middle-class Irish kids. Weren't these
tables just as segregationist as the black table? At the time, no one thought
so. At the time, no one even acknowledged the segregated nature of these
other tables.

Maybe it's the color difference that makes all-black tables or all-black 15
groups attract the scrutiny and wrath of so many people. It scares and an-
gers people; it exasperates. It did those things to me, and I'm black.

As an integrating black person, I know that my decision *not* to join 16
the black lunch table attracted its own kinds of scrutiny and wrath from
my classmates. At the same time that I heard angry words like "Oreo" and

“white boy” being hurled at me from the black table, I was also dodging impatient questions from white classmates: “Why do all those black kids sit together?” or “Why don’t you ever sit with the other blacks?”

The black lunch table, like those other segregated tables, is a comment 17 on the superficial inroads that integration has made in society. Perhaps I should be happy that even this is a long way from where we started. Yet, I can’t get over the fact that the twenty-seventh table in my junior high school cafeteria is still known as the “black table” — fourteen years after my adolescence.

• • •

Comprehension

1. What exactly is the “black table”?
2. In paragraph 1, Graham says that on a recent visit to his old junior high school he “came upon something that [he] never expected to see again.” Why do you think the sight of the all-black lunch table was such a surprise to him?
3. In Graham’s junior high school, what factors determined where students sat?
4. Why didn’t Graham sit at the “black table” when he was in junior high?
5. When he was a junior high school student, whom did Graham blame for the existence of the exclusively black lunch table? Whom or what does he now see as the cause of the table’s existence?

Purpose and Audience

1. What is Graham’s thesis?
2. Rather than introducing outside supporting information — such as statistics, interviews with educators, or sociological studies — Graham relies on his own opinions and on anecdotal evidence to support his thesis. Do you think this is enough? Explain your reasoning.
3. Why does Graham give background information about himself in this essay — for example, in paragraphs 2 and 12? How does this information affect your reaction to him as a person? Your reaction to his essay? Do you think he needs to supply additional information about himself or about his junior high school? If so, what kind of information would be helpful?
4. Do you think Graham’s primary purpose here is to criticize a system he despises, to change his audience’s views about segregated lunch tables, or to justify his own behavior? Explain your conclusion.
5. In paragraph 5, Graham tells readers that he usually entered the cafeteria with a white friend; in paragraph 12, he reveals that his best friend was white. Why do you suppose he wants his audience to know these facts?

Style and Structure

1. Throughout his essay, Graham asks **rhetorical questions**. Identify as many of these questions as you can. Are they necessary? Provocative? Distracting? Explain.
2. In paragraph 16, Graham quotes his long-ago classmates. What do these quotations reveal? Should he have included more of them?
3. Is Graham's focus on finding causes, describing effects, or both? Explain.
4. This essay uses first-person pronouns and contractions. Do you think Graham would have more credibility if he used a less personal and more formal style?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.
scenario (2) incensed (12) scrutiny (15)
espousing (8) blatantly (13) inroads (17)
2. Does the phrase *black table* have a negative connotation for you? Do you think Graham intends it to? What other names could he give to the table that might present it in a more neutral, even positive, light? What names could he give to the other tables he lists in paragraph 14?

Journal Entry

Graham sees the continued presence of the “black table” as a serious problem. Do you agree?

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** In paragraph 14, Graham mentions other lunch tables that were limited to certain groups and asks, “Weren’t these tables just as segregationist as the black table?” Answer his question in a cause-and-effect essay explaining why you believe “black tables” still exist. In your introduction, quote Graham’s question, and be sure to include parenthetical documentation and a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
2. In addition to self-segregated lunch tables, many colleges also have single-race social clubs, dormitories, fraternities, and even graduation ceremonies. Do you see such self-segregation as something that divides our society (that is, as a cause) or as something that reflects divisions that already exist (that is, as an effect)? Write an essay discussing this issue, supporting your thesis with examples from your own experience.
3. Do the people at your school or workplace tend to segregate themselves according to race, gender, or some other principle? Do you see a problem in such behavior? Write an email to your school’s dean of students or to

your employer explaining what you believe causes this pattern and what effects, positive or negative, you have observed.

Combining the Patterns

In paragraph 14, Graham uses **classification and division**. What is he categorizing? What categories does he identify? What other categories might he include? Why is this pattern of development particularly appropriate for this essay?

Thematic Connections

- “Indian Education” (page 142)
- “The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria” (page 232)
- “Just Walk On By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space” (page 240)
- “College Pressures” (page 450)

Why Vampires Never Die

Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1964, Guillermo del Toro is a writer, producer, and director best known for films like the supernatural thriller *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) and the *Hellboy* superhero series. In 2009, del Toro published his first novel, *The Strain*, cowritten with Chuck Hogan. This book is the first in a vampire trilogy by the two authors. Chuck Hogan is a crime fiction and horror novelist whose books include *The Blood Artists* (1999), *Prince of Thieves* (2004), and *The Killing Moon* (2008).

Background on vampire movies As generations of filmmakers have reinvented the Dracula myth on-screen, movie vampires have ranged from the handsome and romantic to the grotesque and even comical. The most famous early depiction was German director F. W. Murnau's influential and expressionistic *Nosferatu* (1922), in which actor Max Schreck played a repulsive, toothy, and rat-like version of the creature. With actors Bela Lugosi in *Dracula* (1931) and Christopher Lee in *The Horror of Dracula* (1958), the vampire became a more romantic figure. In the years since, the character has proven very versatile, featured in blaxploitation films like *Blacula* (1972) and campy comedy horror movies such as *Fright Night* (1985) as well as in director Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* (1992), a faithful adaptation of Bram Stoker's original novel. More recently, the television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003), the *Twilight* book and movie series, and HBO's *True Blood* have reaffirmed the enduring appeal of vampires.

Tonight, you or someone you love will likely be visited by a vampire — on cable television or the big screen, or in the bookstore. Our own novel describes a modern-day epidemic that spreads across New York City.

It all started nearly 200 years ago. It was the “Year Without a Summer” of 1816, when ash from volcanic eruptions lowered temperatures around the globe, giving rise to widespread famine. A few friends gathered at the Villa Diodati on Lake Geneva and decided to engage in a small competition to see who could come up with the most terrifying tale — and the two great monsters of the modern age were born.

One was created by Mary Godwin, soon to become Mary Shelley, whose Dr. Frankenstein gave life to a desolate creature. The other monster was less created than fused. John William Polidori stitched together folklore, personal resentment, and erotic anxieties into “The Vampyre,” a story that is the basis for vampires as they are understood today.

With “The Vampyre,” Polidori gave birth to the two main branches of vampiric fiction: the vampire as romantic hero, and the vampire as undead monster. This ambivalence may reflect Polidori's own, as it is widely accepted that Lord Ruthven, the titular creature, was based upon Lord

Byron* — literary superstar of the era and another resident of the lakeside villa that fateful summer. Polidori tended to Byron day and night, both as his doctor and most devoted groupie. But Polidori resented him as well: Byron was dashing and brilliant, while the poor doctor had a rather drab talent and unremarkable physique.

But this was just a new twist to a very old idea. The myth, established well before the invention of the word “vampire,” seems to cross every culture, language, and era. The Indian Baital, the Ch’ing Shih in China, and the Romanian Strigoi are but a few of its names. The creature seems to be as old as Babylonia and Sumer. Or even older.

The vampire may originate from a repressed memory we had as primates. Perhaps at some point we were — out of necessity — cannibalistic. As soon as we became sedentary, agricultural tribes with social boundaries, one seminal myth might have featured our ancestors as primitive beasts who slept in the cold loam of the earth and fed off the salty blood of the living.

Monsters, like angels, are invoked by our individual and collective needs. Today, much as during that gloomy summer in 1816, we feel the need to seek their cold embrace.

Herein lies an important clue: in contrast to timeless creatures like the dragon, the vampire does not seek to obliterate us, but instead offers a peculiar brand of blood alchemy. For as his contagion bestows its nocturnal gift, the vampire transforms our vile, mortal selves into the gold of eternal youth, and instills in us something that every social construct seeks to quash: primal lust. If youth is desire married with unending possibility, then vampire lust creates within us a delicious void, one we long to fulfill.

In other words, whereas other monsters emphasize what is mortal in us, the vampire emphasizes the eternal in us. Through the panacea of its blood it turns the lead of our toxic flesh into golden matter.

In a society that moves as fast as ours, where every week a new “blockbuster” must be enthroned at the box office, or where idols are fabricated by consensus every new television season, the promise of something everlasting, something truly eternal, holds a special allure. As a seductive figure, the vampire is as flexible and polyvalent as ever. Witness its slow mutation from the pansexual, decadent Anne Rice** creatures to the current permutations — promising anything from chaste eternal love to wild nocturnal escapades — and there you will find the true essence of immortality: adaptability.

Vampires find their niche and mutate at an accelerated rate now — in the past one would see, for decades, the same variety of fiend, repeated in multiple storylines. Now, vampires simultaneously occur in all forms and tap into our every need: soap opera storylines, sexual liberation, noir detec-

* Eds. note — British poet and major figure of the Romantic era (1788–1824).

** Eds. note — American writer known for her gothic and erotic vampire fiction (b. 1941).

tive fiction, etc. The myth seems to be twittering promiscuously to serve all avenues of life, from cereal boxes to romantic fiction. The fast pace of technology accelerates its viral dispersion in our culture.

But if Polidori remains the roots in the genealogy of our creature, the most widely known vampire was birthed by Bram Stoker* in 1897.

Part of the reason for the great success of his *Dracula* is generally acknowledged to be its appearance at a time of great technological revolution. The narrative is full of new gadgets (telegraphs, typing machines), various forms of communication (diaries, ship logs), and cutting-edge science (blood transfusions) — a mash-up of ancient myth in conflict with the world of the present.

Today as well, we stand at the rich uncertain dawn of a new level of scientific innovation. The wireless technology we carry in our pockets today was the stuff of the science fiction in our youth. Our technological arrogance mirrors more and more the Wellsian** dystopia of dissatisfaction, while allowing us to feel safe and connected at all times. We can call, see, or hear almost anything and anyone no matter where we are. For most people then, the only remote place remains within. “Know thyself” we do not.

Despite our obsessive harnessing of information, we are still ultimately vulnerable to our fates and our nightmares. We enthrone the deadly virus in the very same way that *Dracula* allowed the British public to believe in monsters: through science. Science becomes the modern man’s superstition. It allows him to experience fear and awe again, and to believe in the things he cannot see.

And through awe, we once again regain spiritual humility. The current vampire pandemic serves to remind us that we have no true jurisdiction over our bodies, our climate, or our very souls. Monsters will always provide the possibility of mystery in our mundane “reality show” lives, hinting at a larger spiritual world; for if there are demons in our midst, there surely must be angels lurking nearby as well. In the vampire we find Eros and Thanatos*** fused together in archetypal embrace, spiraling through the ages, undying.

Forever.

17

• • •

Comprehension

1. What is the “modern-day epidemic” to which the writers refer in paragraph 1? In what sense is this an “epidemic”?
2. Who are the “two great monsters of the modern age” (2)? What two branches of vampire fiction do the writers identify?

* Eds. note — Irish writer best known for the novel *Dracula* (1847–1912).

** Eds. note — Referring to the work of science fiction writer H. G. Wells (1866–1946), author of the dystopian novel *The Time Machine* (1895).

*** Eds. note — Erotic love and death.

3. What are the origins of the vampire?
4. In paragraphs 8 and 9, the writers explain the appeal of vampires. In your own words, summarize these two paragraphs.
5. How, according to the writers, has the depiction of the vampire changed in recent years? How does it continue to change? Why is it constantly changing?
6. How is the world we live in today like the world at the time *Dracula* was published? How does this kind of world encourage the proliferation of vampires in popular culture?
7. Why is it that vampires will “never die”?

Purpose and Audience

1. What is this essay’s thesis? Is it explicitly stated? If so, where? If not, state it in one sentence.
2. The writers mention their new novel in paragraph 1. What, if anything, does this tell you about their essay’s purpose?
3. At what kind of audience do you think this essay is aimed? Consider the writers’ topic as well as the essay’s vocabulary and its literary and historical allusions.

Style and Structure

1. Evaluate the essay’s introduction — in particular, the writers’ opening sentence.
2. This essay’s focus is on examining causes of vampires’ continuing popularity. Do the writers also consider effects? If so, where?
3. In the second sentence of paragraph 13, the writers give a series of parenthetical examples. Write a similar sentence for paragraph 14 that provides examples of modern-day “gadgets,” “forms of communication,” and “cutting-edge science.”
4. Why do the writers set off the essay’s last word as a separate paragraph? Do you think it should be part of paragraph 16?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

seminal (6)	permutations (10)
loam (6)	genealogy (12)
alchemy (8)	dystopia (14)
quash (8)	enthroned (15)
panacea (9)	pandemic (16)
polyvalent (10)	archetypal (16)

2. Search the Web to identify Eros and Thanatos. Why do the writers mention these figures in paragraph 16? Why do you think they do not explain who they are?

Journal Entry

Do you see the tremendous recent popularity of vampires as a positive or a negative development? Why?

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** How do you account for the current popularity of books and films about vampires? Write a cause-and-effect essay explaining why vampires continue to live on in the popular imagination. Consider del Toro and Hogan's characterization of the vampire as both "romantic hero" and "undead monster" (4), and quote these terms in your essay. Be sure to cite your source and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
2. Write an essay explaining the popularity of another icon or character — for example, the avatar or the transformer — in films, television, or novels. Or, explain why the popularity of a typical hero of years ago — for example, the cowboy or the superhero — has declined.
3. What effects do you think the proliferation of vampires in popular culture is having on young teenagers? Write a cause-and-effect essay discussing ways in which this emphasis is a positive or a negative influence on young people.

Combining the Patterns

In paragraphs 13–14, the writers use **comparison and contrast**. What are they comparing? How does this comparison support their thesis?

Thematic Connections

- "The Embalming of Mr. Jones" (page 303)
- "Aristotle" (page 484)
- "The Case for Mandatory Organ Donation" (page 614)

Writing Assignments for Cause and Effect

1. **Working with Sources.** “Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call the Police” (page 127), “Who Killed Benny Paret?” (page 339), and “On Dumpster Diving” (page 664) all encourage readers, either directly or indirectly, to take action rather than remain uninvolved. Using information gleaned from these essays (or from others in the text) as support for your thesis, write an essay exploring either the possible consequences of apathy, the possible causes of apathy, or both. Be sure to provide parenthetical documentation for any words or ideas that are not your own, and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for more information on MLA documentation.)
2. Write an updated version of one of this chapter’s essays. For example, you might explore the kinds of pressure Lawrence Otis Graham (“The ‘Black Table’ Is Still There,” page 349) might face as junior high school student today.
3. Various technological and social developments have contributed to the decline of formal letter writing. One of these is the telephone; others include text-messaging, blogs, and email. Consider some other possible causes, and write an essay explaining why letter writing has all but disappeared. You may also consider the *effects* (both positive and negative) of this development.
4. How do you account for the popularity of one of the following: Twitter, Facebook, hip-hop, video games, home schooling, reality TV, fast food, flash mobs, or sensationalist tabloids such as the *Star*? Write an essay considering remote as well as immediate causes for the success of the phenomenon you choose.
5. Between 1946 and 1964, the U.S. birthrate increased considerably. Some of the effects attributed to this “baby boom” include the 1960s antiwar movement, an increase in the crime rate, and the development of the women’s movement. Write an essay exploring some possible effects on the nation’s economy and politics of the baby-boom generation’s growing older. What trends would you expect to find now that the first baby boomers have turned sixty-five?
6. Write an essay tracing a series of events in your life that constitutes a causal chain. Indicate clearly both the sequence of events and the causal connections among them, and be careful not to confuse coincidence with causality.
7. In recent years, almost half of American marriages ended in divorce. However, among married couples of “Generation X,” born between 1965 and 1980, the divorce rate is considerably lower. To what do you attribute this decline in divorce rate? Be as specific as possible, citing “case studies” of families you are familiar with.
8. What do you see as the major cause of any one of these problems: binge drinking among college students, voter apathy, school shootings, childhood obesity, or academic cheating? Based on your identification

of its cause, formulate some specific solutions for the problem you select.

9. Write an essay considering the likely effects of a severe, protracted shortage of one of the following commodities: clean water, rental housing, cell phones, flu vaccine, books, or gasoline. You may consider a community-, city-, or statewide shortage or a nation- or worldwide crisis.
10. Write an essay exploring the causes, effects, or both of increased violence among children in the United States.

Collaborative Activity for Cause and Effect

Working in groups of four, discuss your thoughts about the increasing homeless population, and then list four effects the presence of homeless people is having on you, your community, and our nation. Assign each member of your group to write a paragraph explaining one of the effects the group identifies. Then, arrange the paragraphs by increasing importance, moving from the least to the most significant consequence. Finally, work together to turn your individual paragraphs into an essay: write an introduction, a conclusion, and transitions between paragraphs, and include a thesis statement in paragraph 1.

Comparison and Contrast

What Is Comparison and Contrast?

In the narrowest sense, *comparison* shows how two or more things are similar, and *contrast* shows how they are different. In most writing situations, however, the two related processes of **comparison and contrast** are used together. In the following paragraph from *Disturbing the Universe*, scientist Freeman Dyson compares and contrasts two different styles of human endeavor, which he calls “the gray and the green.”

Topic sentence
(**outlines**
elements of
comparison)

Point-by-point
comparison

In everything we undertake, either on earth or in the sky, we have a choice of two styles, which I call the gray and the green. The distinction between the gray and green is not sharp. Only at the extremes of the spectrum can we say without qualification, this is green and that is gray. The difference between green and gray is better explained by examples than by definitions. Factories are gray, gardens are green. Physics is gray, biology is green. Plutonium is gray, horse manure is green. Bureaucracy is gray, pioneer communities are green. Self-reproducing machines are gray, trees and children are green. Human technology is gray, God’s technology is green. Clones are gray, clades* are green. Army field manuals are gray, poems are green.

A special form of comparison, called **analogy**, explains one thing by comparing it to a second, more familiar thing. In the following paragraph from *The Shopping Mall High School*, Arthur G. Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David K. Cohen use analogy to shed light on the nature of contemporary American high schools.

* Eds. note — A group of organisms that evolved from a common ancestor.

If Americans want to understand their high schools at work, they should imagine them as shopping malls. Secondary education is another consumption experience in an abundant society. Shopping malls attract a broad range of customers with different tastes and purposes. Some shop at Target, others at Bloomingdale's. In high schools a broad range of students also shop. They too can select from an astonishing variety of products and services conveniently assembled in one place with ample parking. Furthermore, in malls and schools many different kinds of transactions are possible. Both institutions bring hopeful purveyors and potential purchasers together. The former hope to maximize sales but can take nothing for granted. Shoppers have a wide discretion not only about what to buy but also about whether to buy.

Using Comparison and Contrast

Throughout our lives, we are bombarded with information from newspapers, television, radio, the Internet, and personal experience: the police strike in Memphis; city workers walk out in Philadelphia; the Senate debates government spending; taxes are raised in New Jersey. Somehow we must make sense of the jumbled facts and figures that surround us. One way we have of understanding information like this is to put it side by side with other data and then to compare and contrast. Do the police in Memphis have the same complaints as the city workers in Philadelphia? What are the differences between the two situations? Is the national debate on spending analogous to the New Jersey debate on taxes? How do they differ?

We apply comparison and contrast every day to matters that directly affect us. When we make personal decisions, we consider alternatives, asking ourselves whether one option seems better than another. Should I major in history or business? What job opportunities will each major offer me? Should I register as a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent? What are the positions of each political party on government spending, health care, and taxes? To answer questions like these, we use comparison and contrast.

Planning a Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

Because comparison and contrast is central to our understanding of the world, this way of thinking is often called for in papers and on essay exams.

Compare and contrast the attitudes toward science and technology expressed in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and George Lucas's *Star Wars*. (film)

What are the similarities and differences between mitosis and meiosis? (biology)

Discuss the relative merits of establishing a partnership or setting up a corporation. (business law)

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of bilingual education. (education)

Recognizing Comparison-and-Contrast Assignments

You are not likely to sit down and say to yourself, “I think I’ll write a comparison-and-contrast essay today. Now what can I write about?” Instead, your assignment will suggest comparison and contrast, or you will decide comparison and contrast suits your purpose. In the preceding examples, for instance, the instructors phrased their questions to tell students how to treat the material. When you read these questions, certain key words and phrases — *compare and contrast*, *similarities and differences*, *relative merits*, *advantages and disadvantages* — indicate you should use a comparison-and-contrast pattern to organize your essay. Sometimes you may not even need a key phrase. Consider the question “Which of the two Adamses, John or Samuel, had the greater influence on the timing and course of the American Revolution?” Here the word *greater* is enough to suggest a contrast.

Even when your assignment is not worded to suggest comparison and contrast, your purpose may indicate this pattern of development. For instance, when you **evaluate**, you frequently use comparison and contrast. If, as a student in a management course, you are asked to evaluate two health-care systems, you can begin by researching the standards experts use in their evaluations. You can then compare each system’s performance with those standards and contrast the systems with each other, concluding perhaps that both systems meet minimum standards but that one is more cost-efficient than the other. Or, if you are evaluating two of this year’s new cars for a consumer newsletter, you can establish some criteria — fuel economy, safety features, reliability, handling, style — and compare and contrast the cars on each criterion. If each of the cars is better in different categories, your readers will have to decide which features matter most to them.

Establishing a Basis for Comparison

Before you can compare and contrast two things, you must be sure a **basis for comparison** exists — that the two things have enough in common to justify the comparison. For example, although cats and dogs are very different, they share several significant elements: they are mammals, they make good pets, and they are intelligent. Without these shared elements, there would be no basis for analysis and nothing of importance to discuss.

A comparison should lead you beyond the obvious. For instance, at first the idea of a comparison-and-contrast essay based on an analogy

between bees and people might seem absurd: after all, these two creatures differ in species, physical structure, and intelligence. In fact, their differences are so obvious that an essay based on them might seem pointless. But after further analysis, you might decide that bees and people have quite a few similarities. Both are social animals that live in complex social structures, and both have tasks to perform and roles to fulfill in their respective societies. Therefore, you *could* write about them, but you would focus on the common elements that seem most provocative – social structures and roles – rather than on dissimilar elements. If you tried to draw an analogy between bees and SUVs or humans and golf tees, however, you would run into trouble. Although some points of comparison could be found, they would be trivial. Why bother to point out that both bees and SUVs can travel great distances or that both people and tees are needed to play golf? Neither statement establishes a significant basis for comparison.

When two subjects are very similar, the contrast may be worth writing about. And when two subjects are not very much alike, you may find that the similarities are worth considering.

Selecting Points for Discussion

After you decide which subjects to compare and contrast, you need to select the points you want to discuss. You do this by determining your emphasis – on similarities, differences, or both – and the major focus of your paper. If your purpose in comparing two types of houseplants is to explain that one is easier to grow than the other, you would select points having to do with plant care, not those having to do with plant biology.

When you compare and contrast, make sure you treat the same (or at least similar) elements for each subject you discuss. For instance, if you were going to compare and contrast two novels, you might consider the following elements in both works.

NOVEL A	NOVEL B
Minor characters	Minor characters
Major characters	Major characters
Themes	Themes

Try to avoid the common error of discussing entirely different elements for each subject. Such an approach obscures any basis for comparison that might exist. The two novels, for example, could not be meaningfully compared or contrasted if you discussed dissimilar elements.

NOVEL A	NOVEL B
Minor characters	Author's life
Major characters	Plot
Themes	Symbolism

Developing a Thesis Statement

After selecting the points you want to discuss, you are ready to develop your thesis statement. This **thesis statement** should tell readers what to expect in your essay, identifying not only the subjects to be compared and contrasted but also the point you will make about them. Your thesis statement should also indicate whether you will concentrate on similarities or differences or both. In addition, it may list the points of comparison and contrast in the order in which they will be discussed in the essay.

The structure of your thesis statement can indicate the emphasis of your essay. As the following sentences illustrate, a thesis statement should highlight the essay's central concern by presenting it in the independent, rather than the dependent, clause of the sentence. Notice that the structure of the first thesis statement emphasizes similarities, while the structure of the second highlights differences.

Despite the fact that television and radio are distinctly different media, they use similar strategies to appeal to their audiences.

Although Melville's *Moby-Dick* and London's *The Sea Wolf* are both about the sea, the minor characters, major characters, and themes of *Moby-Dick* establish its greater complexity.

Structuring a Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

Like every other type of essay in this book, a comparison-and-contrast essay has an **introduction**, several **body paragraphs**, and a **conclusion**. Within the body of your paper, you can use either of two basic comparison-and-contrast strategies — **subject by subject** or **point by point**.

As you might expect, each organizational strategy has advantages and disadvantages. In general, you should use subject-by-subject comparison when your purpose is to emphasize overall similarities or differences, and you should use point-by-point comparison when your purpose is to emphasize individual points of similarity or difference.

Using Subject-by-Subject Comparison

In a **subject-by-subject comparison**, you essentially write a separate essay about each subject, but you discuss the same points for both subjects. Use your basis for comparison to guide your selection of points, and arrange these points in some logical order, usually in order of their increasing significance. The following informal outline illustrates a subject-by-subject comparison.

Introduction:

Thesis statement — Despite the fact that television and radio are distinctly different media, they use similar strategies to appeal to their audiences.

Television audiences

- Point 1: Men
- Point 2: Women
- Point 3: Children

Radio audiences

- Point 1: Men
- Point 2: Women
- Point 3: Children

Conclusion: Restatement of thesis or review of key points

Subject-by-subject comparisons are most appropriate for short, uncomplicated papers. In longer papers, where you might make many points about each subject, this organizational strategy demands too much of your readers, requiring them to keep track of all your points throughout your paper. In addition, because of the length of each section, your paper may seem like two completely separate essays. For longer or more complex papers, then, it is often best to use point-by-point comparison.

Using Point-by-Point Comparison

In a **point-by-point comparison**, you make a point about one subject and then follow it with a comparable point about the other. This alternating pattern continues throughout the body of your essay until all your points have been made. The following informal outline illustrates a point-by-point comparison.

- Introduction: Thesis statement — Although Melville’s *Moby-Dick* and London’s *The Sea Wolf* are both about the sea, the minor characters, major characters, and themes of *Moby-Dick* establish its greater complexity.
- Minor characters
 - Book 1: *The Sea Wolf*
 - Book 2: *Moby-Dick*
- Major characters
 - Book 1: *The Sea Wolf*
 - Book 2: *Moby-Dick*
- Themes
 - Book 1: *The Sea Wolf*
 - Book 2: *Moby-Dick*
- Conclusion: Restatement of thesis or review of key points

Point-by-point comparisons are useful for longer, more complicated essays in which you discuss many different points. (If you treat only one

or two points of comparison, you should consider a subject-by-subject organization.) In a point-by-point essay, readers can follow comparisons or contrasts more easily and do not have to wait several paragraphs to find out, for example, the differences between minor characters in *Moby-Dick* and *The Sea Wolf* or to remember on page five what was said on page three. Nevertheless, it is easy to fall into a monotonous, back-and-forth movement between points when you write a point-by-point comparison. To avoid this problem, vary your sentence structure as you move from point to point—and be sure to use clear transitions.

Using Transitions

Transitions are especially important in comparison-and-contrast essays because you must supply readers with clear signals that identify individual similarities and differences. Without these cues, readers will have trouble following your discussion and may lose track of the significance of the points you are making. Some transitions indicating comparison and contrast are listed in the following box. (A more complete list of transitions appears on page 57.)

USEFUL TRANSITIONS FOR COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

COMPARISON

in comparison	like
in the same way	likewise
just as . . . so	similarly

CONTRAST

although	nevertheless
but	nonetheless
conversely	on the contrary
despite	on the one hand . . . on the other hand
even though	still
however	unlike
in contrast	whereas
instead	yet

Longer essays frequently include **transitional paragraphs** that connect one part of an essay to another. A transitional paragraph can be a single sentence that signals a shift in focus or a longer paragraph that provides a concise summary of what was said before. In either case, transitional paragraphs enable readers to pause and consider what has already been said before moving on to a new subject.

Revising a Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

When you revise your comparison-and-contrast essay, consider the items on the revision checklist on page 68. In addition, pay special attention

to the items on the following checklist, which apply specifically to comparison-and-contrast essays.



REVISION CHECKLIST

Comparison and Contrast

- Does your assignment call for comparison and contrast?
- What basis for comparison exists between the two subjects you are comparing?
- Does your essay have a clear thesis statement that identifies both the subjects you are comparing and the points you are making about them?
- Do you discuss the same or similar points for both subjects?
- If you have written a subject-by-subject comparison, have you included a transition paragraph that connects the two sections of the essay?
- If you have written a point-by-point comparison, have you included appropriate transitions and varied your sentence structure to indicate your shift from one point to another?
- Have you included transitional words and phrases that indicate whether you are discussing similarities or differences?

Editing a Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

When you edit your comparison-and-contrast essay, follow the guidelines on the editing checklists on pages 85, 88, and 90. In addition, focus on the grammar, mechanics, and punctuation issues that are particularly relevant to comparison-and-contrast essays. One of these issues — using parallel structure — is discussed below.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

Using Parallelism

Parallelism — the use of matching nouns, verbs, phrases, or clauses to express the same or similar ideas — is often used in comparison-and-contrast essays to emphasize the similarities or differences between one point or subject and another.

- Use parallel structure with paired items or with items in a series.

“I am an American citizen and she is not” (Mukherjee 404).

“For women, as for girls, intimacy is the fabric of relationships, and talk is the thread from which it is woven” (Tannen 424).

“Lee was tidewater Virginia, and in his background were family, culture, and tradition . . . the age of chivalry transplanted to a New World which was making its own legends and its own myths” (Catton 394).

According to Bruce Catton, Lee was strong, aristocratic, and dedicated to the Confederacy (393).

- Use parallel structure with paired items linked by correlative conjunctions (*not only/but also*, *both/and*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, and so on).

“In everything we undertake, **either** on earth **or** in the sky, we have a choice of two styles, which I call the gray and the green” (Dyson 371).

Not only does Catton admire Grant, **but he also** respects him.

- Use parallel structure to emphasize the contrast between paired items linked by *as* or *than*.

According to Deborah Tannen, conversation between men and women is **as** much a problem for men **as** a problem for women (426).

As Deborah Tannen observes, most men are socialized to communicate through actions **rather than** to communicate through conversation (424).

For more practice in using parallelism, visit the resources for Chapter 11 at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.



EDITING CHECKLIST

Comparison and Contrast

- Have you used parallel structure with parallel elements in a series?
- Have you used commas to separate three or more parallel elements in a series?
- Have you used parallel structure with paired items linked by correlative conjunctions?
- Have you used parallel structure with paired items linked by *as* or *than*?

A STUDENT WRITER: Subject-by-Subject Comparison

The following essay, by Mark Cotharn, is a subject-by-subject comparison. It was written for a composition class whose instructor asked students to write an essay comparing two educational experiences.

Brains versus Brawn

Introduction

When people think about discrimination, they usually associate it with race or gender. But discrimination can take other forms. For example, a person can gain an unfair advantage at a job interview by being attractive, by knowing someone who works at the company, or by being able to talk about something (like

*Thesis statement
(emphasizing
differences)*

*First subject:
Mark helped by
discrimination
Status of football*

*Treatment by
teachers*

*Mark's reaction to
treatment*

sports) that has nothing to do with the job. Certainly, the people who do not get the job would claim that they were discriminated against, and to some extent they would be right. As a high school athlete, I experienced both sides of discrimination. When I was a sophomore, I benefited from discrimination. When I was a junior, however, I was penalized by it, treated as if there were no place for me in a classroom. As a result, I learned that discrimination, whether it helps you or hurts you, is wrong.

At my high school, football was everything, and the entire town supported the local team. In the summer, merchants would run special football promotions. Adults would wear shirts with the team's logo, students would collect money to buy equipment, and everyone would go to the games and cheer the team on. Coming out of junior high school, I was considered an exceptional athlete who was eventually going to start as varsity quarterback. Because of my status, I was enthusiastically welcomed by the high school. Before I entered the school, the varsity coach visited my home, and the principal called my parents and told them how well I was going to do.

I knew that high school would be different from junior high, but I wasn't prepared for the treatment I received from my teachers. Many of them talked to me as if I were their friend, not their student. My math teacher used to keep me after class just to talk football; he would give me a note so I could be late for my next class. My biology teacher told me I could skip the afternoon labs so that I would have some time for myself before practice. Several of my teachers told me that during football season, I didn't have to hand in homework because it might distract me during practice. My Spanish teacher even told me that if I didn't do well on a test, I could take it over after the season. Everything I did seemed to be perfect.

Despite this favorable treatment, I continued to study hard. I knew that if I wanted to go to a good college, I would have to get good grades, and I resented the implication that the only way I could get good grades was by getting special treatment. I had always been a good student, and I had no intention of changing my study habits now that I was in high school. Each night after practice, I stayed up late outlining my notes and completing my class assignments. Any studying I couldn't do during the week, I would complete on the weekends. Of course my social life suffered,

but I didn't care. I was proud that I never took advantage of the special treatment my teachers were offering me.

Transitional paragraph: signals shift from one subject to another

Then, one day, the unthinkable happened. The township redrew the school-district lines, and I suddenly found myself assigned to a new high school — one that was academically more demanding than the one I attended and, worse, one that had a weak football team. When my parents appealed to the school board to let me stay at my current school, they were told that if the board made an exception for me, it would have to make exceptions for others, and that would lead to chaos. My principal and my coach also tried to get the board to change its decision, but they got the same response. So, in my junior year, at the height of my career, I changed schools.

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Second subject: Mark hurt by discrimination

Unlike the people at my old school, no one at my new school seemed to care much about high school football. Many of the students attended the games, but their primary focus was on getting into college. If they talked about football at all, they usually discussed the regional college teams. As a result, I didn't have the status I had when I attended my former school. When I met with the coach before school started, he told me the football team was weak. He also told me that his main goal was to make sure everyone on the team had a chance to play. So, even though I would start, I would have to share the quarterback position with two seniors. Later that day, I saw the principal, who told me that although sports were an important part of school, academic achievement was more important. He made it clear that I would play football only as long as my grades did not suffer.

6

Status of football

Treatment by teachers

Unlike the teachers at my old school, the teachers at my new school did not give any special treatment to athletes. When I entered my new school, I was ready for the challenge. What I was not ready for was the hostility of most of my new teachers. From the first day, in just about every class, my teachers made it obvious that they had already made up their minds about what kind of student I was going to be. Some teachers told me I shouldn't expect any special consideration just because I was the team's quarterback. One even said in front of the class that I would have to study as hard as the other students if I expected to pass. I was hurt and embarrassed by these comments. I didn't expect anyone to give me anything, and I was ready to get the grades I deserved. After all, I had gotten good grades up to this

7

Mark's reaction to treatment

point, and I had no reason to think that the situation would change. Even so, my teachers' preconceived ideas upset me.

Just as I had in my old school, I studied hard, but I didn't 8
know how to deal with the prejudice I faced. At first, it really
bothered me and even affected my performance on the football
field. However, after awhile, I decided that the best way to show
my teachers that I was not the stereotypical jock was to prove to
them what kind of student I really was. In the long run, far from
discouraging me, their treatment motivated me, and I decided to
work as hard in the classroom as I did on the football field. By the
end of high school, not only had the team won half of its games
(a record season), but I had also proved to my teachers that I was
a good student. (I still remember the surprised look on the face of
my chemistry teacher when she handed my first exam back to me
and told me that I had received the second highest grade in the
class.)

Conclusion

Before I graduated, I talked to the teachers about how they 9
had treated me during my junior year. Some admitted they had
been harder on me than on the rest of the students, but others
denied they had ever discriminated against me. Eventually, I
realized that some of them would never understand what they
had done. Even so, my experience did have some positive effects.
I learned that you should judge people on their merits, not by
your own set of assumptions. In addition, I learned that although
some people are talented intellectually, others have special skills
that should also be valued. And, as I found out, discriminatory
treatment, whether it helps you or hurts you, is no substitute for
fairness.

Restatement of thesis

Points for Special Attention

Basis for Comparison. Mark knew he could easily compare his two experiences. Both involved high school, and both focused on the treatment he had received as an athlete. In one case, Mark was treated better than other students because he was the team's quarterback; in the other, he was stereotyped as a "dumb jock" because he was a football player. Mark also knew that his comparison would make an interesting (and perhaps unexpected) point—that discrimination is unfair even when it gives a person an advantage.

Selecting Points for Comparison. Mark wanted to make certain that he would discuss the same (or at least similar) points for the two experiences

he was going to compare. As he planned his essay, he consulted his brainstorming notes and made the following informal outline.

EXPERIENCE 1	EXPERIENCE 2
(gained an advantage)	(was put at a disadvantage)
Status of football	Status of football
Treatment by teachers	Treatment by teachers
My reaction	My reaction

Structure. Mark's essay makes three points about each of the two experiences he compares. Because his purpose was to convey the differences between the two experiences, he decided to use a subject-by-subject strategy. In addition, Mark thought he could make his case more convincingly if he discussed the first experience fully before moving on to the next one, and he believed readers would have no trouble keeping his individual points in mind as they read. Of course, Mark could have decided to do a point-by-point comparison. He rejected this strategy, though, because he thought that shifting back and forth between subjects would distract readers from his main point.

Transitions. Without adequate transitions, a subject-by-subject comparison can read like two separate essays. Notice that in Mark's essay, paragraph 5 is a **transitional paragraph** that connects the two sections of the essay. In it, Mark sets up the comparison by telling how he suddenly found himself assigned to another high school.

In addition to connecting the sections of an essay, transitional words and phrases can identify individual similarities or differences. Notice, for example, how the transitional word *however* emphasizes the contrast between the following sentences from paragraph 1.

WITHOUT TRANSITION

When I was a sophomore, I benefited from discrimination. When I was a junior, I was penalized by it.

WITH TRANSITION

When I was a sophomore, I benefited from discrimination. When I was a junior, *however*, I was penalized by it.

Topic Sentences. Like transitional phrases, topic sentences help to guide readers through an essay. When reading a comparison-and-contrast essay, readers can easily forget the points being compared, especially if the paper is long or complex. Direct, clearly stated topic sentences act as guideposts, alerting readers to the comparisons and contrasts you are making. For example, Mark's straightforward topic sentence at the beginning of paragraph 5 dramatically signals the movement from one experience to the other ("Then, one day, the unthinkable happened"). In

addition, as in any effective comparison-and-contrast essay, each point discussed in connection with one subject is also discussed in connection with the other. Mark's topic sentences reinforce this balance.

FIRST SUBJECT

At my high school, football was everything, and the entire town supported the local team.

SECOND SUBJECT

Unlike the people at my old school, no one at my new school seemed to care much about high school football.

Focus on Revision

In general, Mark's classmates thought he could have spent more time talking about what he did to counter the preconceptions about athletes that teachers in *both* his schools had.

One student in his peer editing group pointed out that the teachers at both schools seemed to think athletes were weak students. The only difference was that the teachers at Mark's first school were willing to make allowances for athletes, while the teachers at his second school were not. The student thought that although Mark alluded to this fact, he should have made his point more explicitly.

Another classmate thought Mark should acknowledge that some student athletes *do* fit the teachers' stereotypes (although many do not). This information would reinforce his thesis and help him demonstrate how unfair his treatment was.

After rereading his essay, along with his classmates' comments, Mark decided to add information about how demanding football practice was. Without this information, readers would have a hard time understanding how difficult it was for him to keep up with his studies. He also decided to briefly acknowledge the fact that though he did not fit the negative stereotype of student athletes, some other student athletes do. This fact, however, did not justify the treatment he received at the two high schools he attended. (A sample peer editing worksheet for comparison and contrast appears on page 390.)

Working with Sources. One of Mark's classmates suggested that he add a quotation from David J. Birnbaum's essay "The Catbird Seat" (page 228) to his essay. The student pointed out that Birnbaum, like Mark, was given an advantage that he considered unfair. By referring to Birnbaum's essay, Mark would widen the focus of his remarks and show how his experience was similar to that of someone who is physically challenged. Mark agreed and decided to refer to Birnbaum's essay in the next draft of his paper. (Adding this reference would require him to include MLA parenthetical documentation as well as a works-cited page.)

A STUDENT WRITER: Point-by-Point Comparison

The following essay, by Maria Tecson, is a point-by-point comparison. It was written for a class in educational psychology whose instructor asked students to compare two Web sites about a health issue and to determine which is the more reliable information source.

A Comparison of Two Web Sites on Attention Deficit Disorder

Introduction

At first glance, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Web site on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (nimh.nih.gov) and AdultADD.com — two Web sites on Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) — look a lot alike. Both have good designs, informative headings, and links to other Web sites. Because anyone can publish on the Internet, however, Web sites cannot be judged simply on how they look. Colorful graphics and an appealing layout can often hide shortcomings that make sites unsuitable for use as research sources. As a comparison of the NIMH and AdultADD.com Web sites shows, one site is definitely a more reliable source of information than the other.

*Thesis statement
(emphasizing
differences)*

*First point:
comparing home
pages*

*NIMH home
page*

The first difference between the two Web sites is the design of their home pages. The nimh.nih.gov home page looks clear and professional. For example, the logos, tabs, links, search boxes, and text columns are placed carefully on the page (see fig. 1). Words are spelled correctly; tabs help users to navigate; and content is arranged topically, with headers such as “What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?” and “Signs & Symptoms.” The text, set in columns, looks like a newspaper page. Throughout the Web site, links connect to a reference page that lists sources for articles, and footnotes document information. In addition, the nimh.nih.gov site contains links to other reliable Web sites, both governmental and academic. Finally, the site accommodates sight-disabled people by giving them the option of viewing enlarged text.

*Adult ADD home
page*

The AdultADD.com home page is more open than the NIMH home page; it has less text and contains fewer design elements (see fig. 2). Even so, the arrangement of text on the page, the no-nonsense style, and the lack of misspellings indicate that it has been carefully designed. The home page is straightforward and businesslike and looks like a PowerPoint slide. It is easy to navigate and contains simple headings, such as “Find a Physician” and “Treatment for Adults.” Despite the clean, direct design, however, the layout raises a question: why isn’t this site linked to

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/adhdmenu.cfm>. The page header includes the NIMH logo and the text "National Institute of Mental Health" and "NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH". The main content area is titled "Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)". It includes a section "What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?" with a paragraph explaining that ADHD is one of the most common mental disorders that develop in children. It also includes a section "Signs & Symptoms" with a list of symptoms: Impulsiveness, Hyperactivity, and Inattention. On the right side, there is a section "Publications/Resource Materials" with links to "Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Overview)" and "Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder".

Fig. 1. National Institute of Mental Health. *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*. NIMH, 16 Nov. 2010. Web. 16 Nov. 2010.

any other Web sites about ADD or ADHD? Unlike nimh.nih.gov, the AdultADD.com Web site has no reference page and no footnotes. In addition, it does not accommodate sight-disabled users.

Second point:
comparing
sponsors

NIMH site sponsor

Another difference between the two Web sites is who posted 4 them. One look at the URL for the NIMH Web site indicates that it is a .gov—a Web site created by a branch of the United States government. The logo in the upper left-hand corner of the home page identifies the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) as the sponsor of the site. In addition, every article on the Web site has a listed author, so users know exactly who is responsible for the content. The “About NIMH” tab on the upper right of the home page takes users to a description of NIMH, as well as to contact information. Here visitors to the site find out that NIMH is part of the National Institutes of Health, which is, in turn, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Furthermore, NIMH is the “lead Federal agency for research on mental and behavioral disorders.” This description also makes

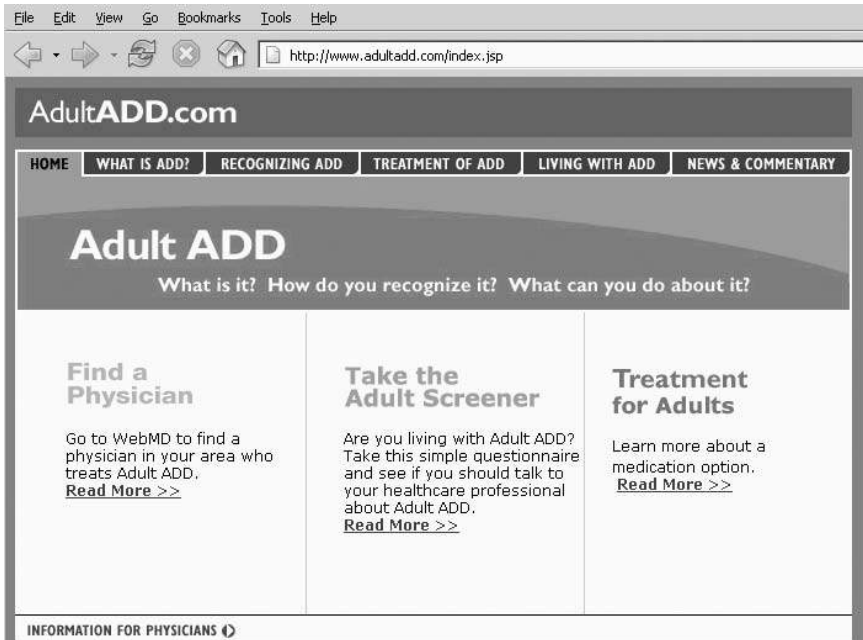


Fig. 2. *AdultADD*. N.p. n.d. Web. 16 Nov. 2010.

*Adult ADD site
sponsor*

clear the NIMH Web site's purpose: to give the American public the latest information about ADHD. For this reason, the Web site lists all the medications used to treat ADHD and evaluates the various treatment options available to patients.

The URL for the AdultADD.com Web site ends with .com, indicating that it is a commercial site that promotes a product. It is not immediately clear, however, who (or what) sponsors the Web site. The home page has no corporate logo and no identifying information. Across the top of the home page are a series of links — “What is ADD?” “Recognizing ADD,” and so on. Each of these links leads to a page that contains a video clip of a television commercial that promotes Strattera, a drug manufactured by the Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company for the treatment of ADD. If you click on the links in the middle of the page, however, you never encounter this information. For this reason, there is a possibility that much of the information these links lead to is biased. In other words, Lilly could be highlighting treatments that involve its own product and disregarding treatments that involve products made by other pharmaceutical companies.

*Third point:
comparing
frequency of
updates*

NIMH updates

A final difference between the two Web sites is how frequently they are updated. The NIMH Web site makes a point of staying up-to-date, presenting the most current information on its subject. The bottom left-hand corner of the NIMH home page contains the exact date the site was last updated, and each page on the Web site has a different date, so it is clear when every article on the site was written and posted.

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Adult ADD updates

The AdultADD.com Web site, however, is less clear about updates. The date on the bottom of the home page indicates only when the Web site was copyrighted; it does not indicate when the Web site itself was updated. This omission makes it very difficult for a visitor to the site to determine how current the information on the site actually is.

7

Conclusion

A comparison of the NIMH Web site and AdultADD.com Web site shows some clear differences between the two. The NIMH Web site makes it easy for users to find out who posted the site, who wrote material on it, and when the site was last updated. The AdultADD.com Web site, however, hides its commercial purpose and makes it difficult for visitors to the site to find out who posted the material and when it was last updated. For these reasons, the NIMH Web site is a more trustworthy source of information than the AdultADD.com Web site.

8

*Restatement
of thesis*

Points for Special Attention

Structure. Maria's purpose in writing this essay was to compare two Web sites that deal with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and to determine which is the better, more reliable source of information. She structured her essay as a point-by-point comparison, carefully discussing the same points for each subject. With this method of organization, she can be sure her readers will understand the specific differences between the NIMH Web site and the AdultADD.com Web site. Had Maria used a subject-by-subject comparison, her readers would have had to keep turning back to match the points she made about one Web site with those she made about the other.

Topic Sentences. Without clear topic sentences, Maria's readers would have had difficulty determining where each discussion of the NIMH Web site ended and each one about the AdultADD.com Web site began. Maria uses topic sentences to distinguish the two subjects of her comparison and to make the contrast between them clear.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Point 1 | <p>The nimh.nih.gov home page looks clear and professional.</p> <p>The AdultADD.com home page is more open than the NIMH home page; it has less text and contains fewer design elements.</p> |
| Point 2 | <p>One look at the URL for the NIMH Web site indicates that it is a <i>.gov</i> — a Web site created by a branch of the United States government.</p> <p>The URL for the AdultADD.com Web site ends with <i>.com</i>, indicating that it is a commercial site that promotes a product.</p> |
| Point 3 | <p>The NIMH Web site makes a point of staying up-to-date, presenting the most current information on its subject.</p> <p>The AdultADD.com Web site, however, is less clear about updates.</p> |

Transitions. In addition to clear and straightforward topic sentences, Maria included **transitional sentences** to help readers move through the essay. These sentences identify the three points of contrast in the essay and, by establishing a parallel structure, they form a pattern that reinforces the essay's thesis.

The first difference between the two Web sites is the design of their home pages.

Another difference between the two Web sites is who posted them.

A final difference between the two Web sites is how frequently they are updated.

Working with Sources. Maria knew that it would be easier for her to compare the NIMH and AdultADD.com Web sites if she included visuals in her paper. Because readers would be able to see the home pages of both Web sites, Maria would not have to include long passages of description. She could then concentrate on making specific points about the sites and not get sidetracked describing their physical features. Her instructor pointed out that if she added these two visuals, she would have to include a label (*Fig. 1*, *Fig. 2*, and so on) along with a caption under each one. He also told her that if the caption included complete source information, there was no need to list the source on her works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for a discussion of MLA documentation.)

Focus on Revision

Maria's classmates thought the greatest strength of her essay was its use of detail, which made the contrast between the two Web sites clear, but they thought that even more detail would improve her essay. For example, in paragraph 6, Maria could include a few titles of the articles the NIMH Web site lists, along with their dates of publication. In paragraph 7,

she could also list some of the specific information on the AdultADD.com Web site and explain why it is necessary to know when the information was written and posted.

Maria agreed with these suggestions. She also thought she could improve her conclusion: although it summed up the main points of her essay, it contained little that would stay with readers after they finished. A sentence or two to caution readers about the need to carefully evaluate the information they find on Web sites would be an improvement.



PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: Comparison and Contrast

1. Does the essay have a clearly stated thesis? What is it?
2. What two things are being compared? What basis for comparison exists between the two?
3. Does the essay treat the same or similar points for each of its two subjects? List the points discussed.

FIRST SUBJECT

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

SECOND SUBJECT

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Are these points discussed in the same order for both subjects? Are the points presented in parallel terms?

4. Does the essay use a point-by-point or subject-by-subject strategy? Is this the best choice? Why?
5. Are transitional words and phrases used appropriately to identify points of comparison and contrast? List some of the transitions used.
6. Are additional transitions needed? If so, where?
7. How could the introductory paragraph be improved?
8. How could the concluding paragraph be improved?

The selections that follow illustrate both subject-by-subject and point-by-point comparisons. The first selection, a pair of visual texts, is followed by questions designed to illustrate how comparison and contrast can operate in visual form.

AUGUSTE RODIN

The Kiss (Sculpture)



ROBERT INDIANA

LOVE (Sculpture)



• • •

Reading Images

1. What characteristics do the two sculptures pictured above and on the preceding page share? Do they share enough characteristics to establish a basis for comparison? Explain.
2. Make a list of points you could discuss if you were comparing the two sculptures.
3. What general statement could you make about these two sculptures? Do the points you listed in question 2 provide enough support for this general statement?

Journal Entry

How does each sculpture convey the idea of love? Which one do you believe conveys this idea more effectively? Why?

Thematic Connections

- “The Storm” (page 202)
- “Sex, Lies, and Conversation” (page 423)
- “Love and Other Catastrophes: A Mix Tape” (page 520)

Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts

Bruce Catton (1899–1978) was a respected journalist and an authority on the American Civil War. His studies were interrupted by his service during World War I, after which he worked as a journalist and then for various government agencies. Catton edited *American Heritage* magazine from 1954 until his death. Among his many books are *Mr. Lincoln's Army* (1951); *A Stillness at Appomattox* (1953), which won both a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award; and *Gettysburg: The Final Fury* (1974). Catton also wrote a memoir, *Waiting for the Morning Train* (1972), in which he recalls listening as a young boy to the reminiscences of Union Army veterans.

Background on Grant and Lee “Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts,” which first appeared in a collection of historical essays titled *The American Story*, focuses on the two generals who headed the opposing armies during the Civil War (1861–1865). Robert E. Lee led the Army of Northern Virginia, the backbone of the Confederate forces, throughout much of the war. Ulysses S. Grant was named commander in chief of the Union troops in March 1864. By the spring of 1865, although it seemed almost inevitable that the Southern forces would be defeated, Lee made an attempt to lead his troops to join another Confederate army in North Carolina. Finding himself virtually surrounded by Grant’s forces near the small town of Appomattox Court House, Lee chose to surrender to Grant. The following essay considers these two great generals in terms of both their differences and their important similarities.

When Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee met in the parlor of a modest house at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865, to work out the terms for the surrender of Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, a great chapter in American life came to a close, and a great new chapter began.

These men were bringing the Civil War to its virtual finish. To be sure, 2 other armies had yet to surrender, and for a few days the fugitive Confederate government would struggle desperately and vainly, trying to find some way to go on living now that its chief support was gone. But in effect it was all over when Grant and Lee signed the papers. And the little room where they wrote out the terms was the scene of one of the poignant, dramatic contrasts in American history.

They were two strong men, these oddly different generals, and they 3 represented the strengths of two conflicting currents that, through them, had come into final collision.

Back of Robert E. Lee was the notion that the old aristocratic concept 4 might somehow survive and be dominant in American life.

Lee was tidewater Virginia, and in his background were family, culture, 5
and tradition . . . the age of chivalry transplanted to a New World which
was making its own legends and its own myths. He embodied a way of
life that had come down through the age of knighthood and the English
country squire. America was a land that was beginning all over again, dedi-
cated to nothing much more complicated than the rather hazy belief that
all men had equal rights and should have an equal chance in the world.
In such a land Lee stood for the feeling that it was somehow of advantage
to human society to have pronounced inequality in the social structure.
There should be a leisure class, backed by ownership of land; in turn, so-
ciety itself should be keyed to the land as the chief source of wealth and
influence. It would bring forth (according to this ideal) a class of men with
a strong sense of obligation to the community; men who lived not to gain
advantage for themselves, but to meet the solemn obligations which had
been laid on them by the very fact that they were privileged. From them the
country would get its leadership; to them it could look for the higher val-
ues — of thought, of conduct, of personal deportment — to give it strength
and virtue.

Lee embodied the noblest elements of this aristocratic ideal. Through 6
him, the landed nobility justified itself. For four years, the Southern states
had fought a desperate war to uphold the ideals for which Lee stood. In
the end, it almost seemed as if the Confederacy fought for Lee; as if he
himself was the Confederacy . . . the best thing that the way of life for
which the Confederacy stood could ever have to offer. He had passed into
legend before Appomattox. Thousands of tired, underfed, poorly clothed
Confederate soldiers, long since past the simple enthusiasm of the early
days of the struggle, somehow considered Lee the symbol of everything for
which they had been willing to die. But they could not quite put this feeling
into words. If the Lost Cause, sanctified by so much heroism and so many
deaths, had a living justification, its justification was General Lee.

Grant, the son of a tanner on the Western frontier, was everything Lee 7
was not. He had come up the hard way and embodied nothing in particu-
lar except the eternal toughness and sinewy fiber of the men who grew up
beyond the mountains. He was one of a body of men who owed reverence
and obeisance to no one, who were self-reliant to a fault, who cared hardly
anything for the past but who had a sharp eye for the future.

These frontier men were the precise opposites of the tidewater aristo- 8
crats. Back of them, in the great surge that had taken people over the Al-
leghenies and into the opening Western country, there was a deep, implicit
dissatisfaction with a past that had settled into grooves. They stood for
democracy, not from any reasoned conclusion about the proper ordering
of human society, but simply because they had grown up in the middle of
democracy and knew how it worked. Their society might have privileges,
but they would be privileges each man had won for himself. Forms and
patterns meant nothing. No man was born to anything, except perhaps to
a chance to show how far he could rise. Life was competition.

Yet along with this feeling had come a deep sense of belonging to a national community. The Westerner who developed a farm, opened a shop, or set up in business as a trader, could hope to prosper only as his own community prospered — and his community ran from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada down to Mexico. If the land was settled, with towns and highways and accessible markets, he could better himself. He saw his fate in terms of the nation's own destiny. As its horizons expanded, so did his. He had, in other words, an acute dollars-and-cents stake in the continued growth and development of his country.

And that, perhaps, is where the contrast between Grant and Lee becomes most striking. The Virginia aristocrat, inevitably, saw himself in relation to his own region. He lived in a static society which could endure almost anything except change. Instinctively, his first loyalty would go to the locality in which that society existed. He would fight to the limit of endurance to defend it, because in defending it he was defending everything that gave his own life its deepest meaning.

The Westerner, on the other hand, would fight with an equal tenacity for the broader concept of society. He fought so because everything he lived by was tied to growth, expansion, and a constantly widening horizon. What he lived by would survive or fall with the nation itself. He could not possibly stand by unmoved in the face of an attempt to destroy the Union. He would combat it with everything he had, because he could only see it as an effort to cut the ground out from under his feet.

So Grant and Lee were in complete contrast, representing two diametrically opposed elements in American life. Grant was the modern man emerging; beyond him, ready to come on the stage, was the great age of steel and machinery, of crowded cities and a restless burgeoning vitality. Lee might have ridden down from the old age of chivalry, lance in hand, silken banner fluttering over his head. Each man was the perfect champion of his cause, drawing both his strengths and his weaknesses from the people he led.

Yet it was not all contrast, after all. Different as they were — in background, in personality, in underlying aspiration — these two great soldiers had much in common. Under everything else, they were marvelous fighters. Furthermore, their fighting qualities were really very much alike.

Each man had, to begin with, the great virtue of utter tenacity and fidelity. Grant fought his way down the Mississippi Valley in spite of acute personal discouragement and profound military handicaps. Lee hung on in the trenches at Petersburg after hope itself had died. In each man there was an indomitable quality . . . the born fighter's refusal to give up as long as he can still remain on his feet and lift his two fists.

Daring and resourcefulness they had, too; the ability to think faster and move faster than the enemy. These were the qualities which gave Lee the dazzling campaigns of Second Manassas and Chancellorsville and won Vicksburg for Grant.

Lastly, and perhaps greatest of all, there was the ability, at the end, to turn quickly from war to peace once the fighting was over. Out of the way

these two men behaved at Appomattox came the possibility of a peace of reconciliation. It was a possibility not wholly realized, in the years to come, but which did, in the end, help the two sections to become one nation again . . . after a war whose bitterness might have seemed to make such a reunion wholly impossible. No part of either man's life became him more than the part he played in this brief meeting in the McLean house at Appomattox. Their behavior there put all succeeding generations of Americans in their debt. Two great Americans, Grant and Lee — very different, yet under everything very much alike. Their encounter at Appomattox was one of the great moments of American history.

. . .

Comprehension

1. What took place at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865? Why did the meeting at Appomattox signal the closing of “a great chapter in American life” (1)?
2. How does Robert E. Lee represent aristocracy? How does Ulysses S. Grant represent Lee's opposite?
3. According to Catton, where is it that “the contrast between Grant and Lee becomes most striking” (10)?
4. What similarities does Catton see between the two men?
5. Why, according to Catton, are “succeeding generations of Americans” (16) in debt to Grant and Lee?

Purpose and Audience

1. Catton's purpose in contrasting Grant and Lee is to make a statement about the differences between two currents in American history. Summarize these differences. Do you think the differences still exist today? Explain.
2. Is Catton's purpose in comparing Grant and Lee the same as his purpose in contrasting them? That is, do their similarities also make a statement about U.S. history? Explain.
3. State the essay's thesis in your own words.

Style and Structure

1. Does Catton use subject-by-subject or point-by-point comparison? Why do you think he chooses the strategy he does?
2. In this essay, topic sentences are extremely helpful to the reader. Explain the functions of the following sentences: “Grant . . . was everything Lee was not” (7); “So Grant and Lee were in complete contrast” (12); “Yet it was not all contrast, after all” (13); and “Lastly, and perhaps greatest of all . . .” (16).

3. Catton uses transitions skillfully in his essay. Identify the transitional words or expressions that link each paragraph to the preceding one.
4. Why do you suppose Catton provides the background for the meeting at Appomattox but presents no information about the dramatic meeting itself?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

poignant (2)	obeisance (7)	tenacity (14)
chivalry (5)	implicit (8)	fidelity (14)
deportment (5)	inevitably (10)	indomitable (14)
sanctified (6)	diametrically (12)	reconciliation (16)
embodied (7)	burgeoning (12)	
sinewy (7)	aspiration (13)	
2. Go to the online thesaurus at dictionary.com, and look up **synonyms** for each of the following words. Then, determine whether each synonym would be as effective as the word used in this essay.

deportment (5)	obeisance (7)	indomitable (14)
sanctified (6)	diametrically (12)	

Journal Entry

Compare your attitudes about the United States with those held by Grant and by Lee. With which man do you agree?

Writing Workshop

1. Write a “study in contrasts” about two people you know well — two teachers, your parents, two relatives, two friends — or about two fictional characters you are very familiar with. Be sure to include a thesis statement.
2. Write a dialogue between two people you know that reveals their contrasting attitudes toward school, work, or any other subject.
3. **Working with Sources.** Write an essay about two individuals from a period of American history other than the Civil War to make the same points Catton makes. If you do research, make sure you document your sources and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)

Combining the Patterns

In several places, Catton uses **exemplification** to structure a paragraph. For instance, in paragraph 7, he uses examples to support the topic sentence “Grant, the son of a tanner on the Western frontier, was everything Lee was

not.” Identify three paragraphs that use examples to support the topic sentence, and bracket the examples. How do these examples in these paragraphs reinforce the similarities and differences between Grant and Lee?

Thematic Connections

- “Ground Zero” (page 182)
- “Fame-iness” (page 511)
- The Declaration of Independence (page 553)
- “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (page 566)

BHARATI MUKHERJEE

Two Ways to Belong in America

Born in 1940 in Calcutta, India, novelist Bharati Mukherjee immigrated to the United States in 1961. Now a naturalized U.S. citizen, she teaches at the University of California at Berkeley. Mukherjee's novels include *Tiger's Daughter* (1972), *Jasmine* (1989), *Leave It to Me* (1997), *Desirable Daughters* (2002), and *The Tree Bride* (2004); her story collections are *Darkness* (1975) and the prize-winning *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988). Her fiction often explores the tensions between the traditional role of women in Indian society and their very different role in the United States.

Background on U.S. immigration policy The following essay, originally published in 1996, was written in response to proposals in Congress (eventually defeated) to enact legislation denying government benefits, such as Social Security, to resident aliens. Not to be confused with illegal immigrants, resident aliens — also called *legal permanent residents* — are immigrants who live in the United States legally, sometimes for their whole lives, but do not apply for citizenship. Most work and pay taxes like any citizen. According to the census bureau, the United States population includes more than 38 million foreign-born residents, accounting for about 12 percent of the population. Of these, 12.5 million are legal permanent residents, 12.6 million are naturalized citizens, and an estimated 11.1 million are in the country illegally (some experts think this number is much higher); most of the rest are refugees seeking political asylum and students and temporary workers with visas. Although various issues related to immigration policy have been hotly debated for many years, particularly as large numbers of immigrants entered the country in the 1990s, the terrorist attacks of September 2001 have led to closer screenings of foreigners who want to enter the United States, especially those applying for student visas.

This is a tale of two sisters from Calcutta, Mira and Bharati, who have 1
lived in the United States for some 35 years, but who find themselves on
different sides in the current debate over the status of immigrants. I am an
American citizen and she is not. I am moved that thousands of long-term
residents are finally taking the oath of citizenship. She is not.

Mira arrived in Detroit in 1960 to study child psychology and pre- 2
school education. I followed her a year later to study creative writing at the
University of Iowa. When we left India, we were almost identical in appear-
ance and attitude. We dressed alike, in saris; we expressed identical views
on politics, social issues, love, and marriage in the same Calcutta convent-
school accent. We would endure our two years in America, secure our de-
grees, then return to India to marry the grooms of our father's choosing.

Instead, Mira married an Indian student in 1962 who was getting his 3
business administration degree at Wayne State University. They soon ac-
quired the labor certifications necessary for the green card of hassle-free
residence and employment.

Mira still lives in Detroit, works in the Southfield, Mich., school sys- 4
tem, and has become nationally recognized for her contributions in the
fields of pre-school education and parent-teacher relationships. After 36
years as a legal immigrant in this country, she clings passionately to her
Indian citizenship and hopes to go home to India when she retires.

In Iowa City in 1963, I married a fellow student, an American of Ca- 5
nadian parentage. Because of the accident of his North Dakota birth, I
bypassed labor-certification requirements and the race-related "quota" sys-
tem that favored the applicant's country of origin over his or her merit. I
was prepared for (and even welcomed) the emotional strain that came with
marrying outside my ethnic community. In 33 years of marriage, we have
lived in every part of North America. By choosing a husband who was not
my father's selection, I was opting for fluidity, self-invention, blue jeans
and T-shirts, and renouncing 3,000 years (at least) of caste-observant, "pure
culture" marriage in the Mukherjee family. My books have often been read
as unapologetic (and in some quarters overenthusiastic) texts for cultural
and psychological "mongrelization." It's a word I celebrate.

Mira and I have stayed sisterly close by phone. In our regular Sunday 6
morning conversations, we are unguardedly affectionate. I am her only
blood relative on this continent. We expect to see each other through the
looming crises of aging and ill health without being asked. Long before
Vice President Gore's "Citizenship U.S.A." drive, we'd had our polite argu-
ments over the ethics of retaining an overseas citizenship while expecting
the permanent protection and economic benefits that come with living
and working in America.

Like well-raised sisters, we never said what was really on our minds, 7
but we probably pitied one another. She, for the lack of structure in my
life, the erasure of Indianness, the absence of an unvarying daily core. I,
for the narrowness of her perspective, her uninvolvement with the mythic
depths or the superficial pop culture of this society. But, now, with the
scapegoatings of "aliens" (documented or illegal) on the increase, and the
targeting of long-term legal immigrants like Mira for new scrutiny and new
self-consciousness, she and I find ourselves unable to maintain the same
polite discretion. We were always unacknowledged adversaries, and we are
now, more than ever, sisters.

"I feel used," Mira raged on the phone the other night. "I feel manipu- 8
lated and discarded. This is such an unfair way to treat a person who was
invited to stay and work here because of her talent. My employer went to
the I.N.S. and petitioned for the labor certification. For over 30 years, I've
invested my creativity and professional skills into the improvement of *this*
country's pre-school system. I've obeyed all the rules, I've paid my taxes, I
love my work, I love my students, I love the friends I've made. How dare

America now change its rules in midstream? If America wants to make new rules curtailing benefits of legal immigrants, they should apply only to immigrants who arrive after those rules are already in place.”

To my ears, it sounded like the description of a long-enduring, comfortable yet loveless marriage, without risk or recklessness. Have we the right to demand, and to expect, that we be loved? (That, to me, is the subtext of the arguments by immigration advocates.) My sister is an expatriate, professionally generous and creative, socially courteous and gracious, and that’s as far as her Americanization can go. She is here to maintain an identity, not to transform it.

I asked her if she would follow the example of others who have decided to become citizens because of the anti-immigration bills in Congress. And here, she surprised me. “If America wants to play the manipulative game, I’ll play it, too,” she snapped. “I’ll become a U.S. citizen for now, then change back to India when I’m ready to go home. I feel some kind of irrational attachment to India that I don’t to America. Until all this hysteria against legal immigrants, I was totally happy. Having my green card meant I could visit any place in the world I wanted to and then come back to a job that’s satisfying and that I do very well.”

In one family, from two sisters alike as peas in a pod, there could not be a wider divergence of immigrant experience. America spoke to me — I married it — I embraced the demotion from expatriate aristocrat to immigrant nobody, surrendering those thousands of years of “pure culture,” the saris, the delightfully accented English. She retained them all. Which of us is the freak?

Mira’s voice, I realize, is the voice not just of the immigrant South Asian community but of an immigrant community of the millions who have stayed rooted in one job, one city, one house, one ancestral culture, one cuisine, for the entirety of their productive years. She speaks for greater numbers than I possibly can. Only the fluency of her English and the anger, rather than fear, born of confidence from her education, differentiate her from the seamstresses, the domestics, the technicians, the shop owners, the millions of hard-working but effectively silenced documented immigrants as well as their less fortunate “illegal” brothers and sisters.

Nearly 20 years ago, when I was living in my husband’s ancestral homeland of Canada, I was always well-employed but never allowed to feel part of the local Quebec or larger Canadian society. Then, through a Green Paper that invited a national referendum on the unwanted side effects of “nontraditional” immigration, the Government officially turned against its immigrant communities, particularly those from South Asia.

I felt then the same sense of betrayal that Mira feels now. I will never forget the pain of that sudden turning, and the casual racist outbursts the Green Paper elicited. That sense of betrayal had its desired effect and drove me, and thousands like me, from the country.

Mira and I differ, however, in the ways in which we hope to interact with the country that we have chosen to live in. She is happier to live in America as an expatriate Indian than as an immigrant American. I need to

feel like a part of the community I have adopted (as I tried to feel in Canada as well). I need to put roots down, to vote and make the difference that I can. The price that the immigrant willingly pays, and that the exile avoids, is the trauma of self-transformation.

. . .

Comprehension

1. At first, how long did Mukherjee and her sister intend to stay in America? Why did they change their plans?
2. What does Mukherjee mean when she says she welcomed the “emotional strain” of “marrying outside [her] ethnic community” (5)?
3. In what ways is Mukherjee different from her sister? What kind of relationship do they have?
4. Why does Mukherjee’s sister feel used? Why does she say that America has “change[d] its rules in midstream” (8)?
5. According to Mukherjee, how is her sister like all immigrants who “have stayed rooted in one job, one city, one house, one ancestral culture, one cuisine, for the entirety of their productive years” (12)?

Purpose and Audience

1. What is Mukherjee’s thesis? At what point does she state it?
2. At whom is Mukherjee aiming her remarks? Immigrants like herself? Immigrants like her sister? General readers? Explain.
3. What is Mukherjee’s purpose? Is she trying to inform? To move readers to action? To accomplish something else? Explain.

Style and Structure

1. What basis for comparison exists between Mukherjee and her sister? Where in the essay does Mukherjee establish this basis?
2. Is this essay a point-by-point or a subject-by-subject comparison? Why do you think Mukherjee chose the strategy she did?
3. What points does Mukherjee discuss for each subject? Should she have discussed any other points?
4. What transitional words and phrases does Mukherjee use to signal shifts from one point to another?
5. How effective is Mukherjee’s conclusion? Does it summarize the essay’s major points? Would another strategy be more effective? Explain.

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

saris (2)	mythic (7)	curtailing (8)
certifications (3)	superficial (7)	divergence (11)
mongrelization (5)	scrutiny (7)	expatriate (11)
perspective (7)	discretion (7)	trauma (15)

2. What, according to Mukherjee, is the difference between an *immigrant* and an *exile* (15)? What are the connotations of these two words? Do you think the distinction Mukherjee makes is valid?

Journal Entry

Do you think Mukherjee respects her sister's decision? From your perspective, which sister has made the right choice?

Writing Workshop

1. Assume that her sister, Mira, has just read Mukherjee's essay and wants to respond to it. Write an email from Mira comparing her position about assimilation to that of Mukherjee. Make sure you explain Mira's position and address Mukherjee's points about assimilation.
2. Have you ever moved from one town or city to another? Write an essay comparing the two places. Your thesis statement should indicate whether you are emphasizing similarities or differences and convey your opinion of the new area. (If you have never moved, write an essay comparing two places you are familiar with — your college and your high school, for example.)
3. **Working with Sources.** Assume you had to move to another country. Where would you move? Would you, like Mukherjee, assimilate into your new culture, or would you, like her sister, retain your own cultural values? Write an essay comparing life in your new country with life in the United States. (If you have already moved from another country, compare your life in the United States with your life in your country of origin.) Include at least one quotation from Mukherjee's essay in your introduction, and be sure to document the quotation and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)

Combining the Patterns

Do you think Mukherjee should have used **cause and effect** to structure a section explaining why she and her sister are so different? Explain what such a section would add to or take away from the essay.

Thematic Connections

- “Only Daughter” (page 111)
- “Rice” (page 172)
- “The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria” (page 232)
- “The Untouchable” (page 496)

AMY CHUA

Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior

Amy Chua was born in Champaign, Illinois, in 1962. She graduated from Harvard College and earned her J.D. at Harvard Law School, where she was an executive editor of the *Harvard Law Review*. Chua is now the John M. Duff Professor of Law at Yale Law School, where she focuses on international law and business, ethnic conflict, and globalization and the law. She has written two scholarly books, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* (2003) and *Days of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance — and Why They Fall* (2007). Today, however, Chua is best known for her parenting memoir, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (2011).

Background on parenting styles Chua writes disapprovingly about contemporary “Western” parents who, she claims, are “extremely anxious about their children’s self-esteem.” Such anxieties are relatively new, especially when one surveys the history of parenting — from the ancient Greeks, who commonly left unwanted children in the woods to die of exposure, to seventeenth-century American Puritans, who practiced a philosophy of “Better whipt than damned.” French Enlightenment figure Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) proposed a more sympathetic view of the child, writing that when “children’s wills are not spoiled by our fault, children want nothing uselessly.” But in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American parenting philosophies usually focused on discipline, emotional detachment, and the wisdom of experts. As Dr. Luther Emmett Holt wrote in *The Care and Feeding of Children* (1894), “instinct and maternal love are too often assumed to be a sufficient guide for a mother.” Pediatrician Benjamin Spock, who published his enormously influential *Baby and Child Care* in 1946, is often credited with — or blamed for — a social shift toward more permissive child-rearing, especially in the context of the baby-boom generation. Spock urged parents to trust their own judgment and to meet their children’s needs rather than worrying about “spoiling” the child. In the decades that followed, this parenting approach accompanied an increasing emphasis on children’s self-esteem, both at home and in school.

A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically 1 successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it’s like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I’ve done it. Here are some things my daughters, Sophia and Louisa, were never allowed to do:

- attend a sleepover
- have a playdate
- be in a school play

- complain about not being in a school play
- watch TV or play computer games
- choose their own extracurricular activities
- get any grade less than an A
- not be the No. 1 student in every subject except gym and drama
- play any instrument other than the piano or violin
- not play the piano or violin.

I'm using the term "Chinese mother" loosely. I know some Korean, Indian, Jamaican, Irish, and Ghanaian parents who qualify too. Conversely, I know some mothers of Chinese heritage, almost always born in the West, who are not Chinese mothers, by choice or otherwise. I'm also using the term "Western parents" loosely. Western parents come in all varieties.

When it comes to parenting, the Chinese seem to produce children who display academic excellence, musical mastery, and professional success — or so the stereotype goes. *WSJ's** Christina Tsuei speaks to two moms raised by Chinese immigrants who share what it was like growing up and how they hope to raise their children.

All the same, even when Western parents think they're being strict, they usually don't come close to being Chinese mothers. For example, my Western friends who consider themselves strict make their children practice their instruments 30 minutes every day. An hour at most. For a Chinese mother, the first hour is the easy part. It's hours two and three that get tough.

Despite our squeamishness about cultural stereotypes, there are tons of studies out there showing marked and quantifiable differences between Chinese and Westerners when it comes to parenting. In one study of 50 Western American mothers and 48 Chinese immigrant mothers, almost 70 percent of the Western mothers said either that "stressing academic success is not good for children" or that "parents need to foster the idea that learning is fun." By contrast, roughly 0 percent of the Chinese mothers felt the same way. Instead, the vast majority of the Chinese mothers said that they believe their children can be "the best" students, that "academic achievement reflects successful parenting," and that if children did not excel at school then there was "a problem" and parents "were not doing their job." Other studies indicate that compared to Western parents, Chinese parents spend approximately 10 times as long every day drilling academic activities with their children. By contrast, Western kids are more likely to participate in sports teams.

What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you're good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences. This often requires fortitude on the part of the parents because the child will resist; things are always hardest at the beginning, which is where Western parents tend to give up. But if done properly, the Chinese strategy produces a virtuous circle. Tenacious practice, practice, practice is crucial

* Eds. note — *Wall Street Journal*.

for excellence; rote repetition is underrated in America. Once a child starts to excel at something — whether it's math, piano, pitching, or ballet — he or she gets praise, admiration, and satisfaction. This builds confidence and makes the once not-fun activity fun. This in turn makes it easier for the parent to get the child to work even more.

Chinese parents can get away with things that Western parents can't. 7
Once when I was young — maybe more than once — when I was extremely disrespectful to my mother, my father angrily called me “garbage” in our native Hokkien dialect. It worked really well. I felt terrible and deeply ashamed of what I had done. But it didn't damage my self-esteem or anything like that. I knew exactly how highly he thought of me. I didn't actually think I was worthless or feel like a piece of garbage.

As an adult, I once did the same thing to Sophia, calling her “garbage” 8
in English when she acted extremely disrespectfully toward me. When I mentioned that I had done this at a dinner party, I was immediately ostracized. One guest named Marcy got so upset she broke down in tears and had to leave early. My friend Susan, the host, tried to rehabilitate me with the remaining guests.

The fact is that Chinese parents can do things that would seem un- 9
imaginable — even legally actionable — to Westerners. Chinese mothers can say to their daughters, “Hey fatty — lose some weight.” By contrast, Western parents have to tiptoe around the issue, talking in terms of “health” and never ever mentioning the f-word, and their kids still end up in therapy for eating disorders and negative self-image. (I also once heard a Western father toast his adult daughter by calling her “beautiful and incredibly competent.” She later told me that made her feel like garbage.)

Chinese parents can order their kids to get straight As. Western parents 10
can only ask their kids to try their best. Chinese parents can say, “You're lazy. All your classmates are getting ahead of you.” By contrast, Western parents have to struggle with their own conflicted feelings about achievement, and try to persuade themselves that they're not disappointed about how their kids turned out.

I've thought long and hard about how Chinese parents can get away 11
with what they do. I think there are three big differences between the Chinese and Western parental mind-sets.

First, I've noticed that Western parents are extremely anxious about 12
their children's self-esteem. They worry about how their children will feel if they fail at something, and they constantly try to reassure their children about how good they are notwithstanding a mediocre performance on a test or at a recital. In other words, Western parents are concerned about their children's psyches. Chinese parents aren't. They assume strength, not fragility, and as a result they behave very differently.

For example, if a child comes home with an A-minus on a test, a West- 13
ern parent will most likely praise the child. The Chinese mother will gasp in horror and ask what went wrong. If the child comes home with a B on the test, some Western parents will still praise the child. Other Western parents will sit their child down and express disapproval, but they will be careful

not to make their child feel inadequate or insecure, and they will not call their child “stupid,” “worthless,” or “a disgrace.” Privately, the Western parents may worry that their child does not test well or have aptitude in the subject or that there is something wrong with the curriculum and possibly the whole school. If the child’s grades do not improve, they may eventually schedule a meeting with the school principal to challenge the way the subject is being taught or to call into question the teacher’s credentials.

If a Chinese child gets a B — which would never happen — there would first be a screaming, hair-tearing explosion. The devastated Chinese mother would then get dozens, maybe hundreds of practice tests and work through them with her child for as long as it takes to get the grade up to an A.

Chinese parents demand perfect grades because they believe that their child can get them. If their child doesn’t get them, the Chinese parent assumes it’s because the child didn’t work hard enough. That’s why the solution to substandard performance is always to excoriate, punish, and shame the child. The Chinese parent believes that their child will be strong enough to take the shaming and to improve from it. (And when Chinese kids do excel, there is plenty of ego-inflating parental praise lavished in the privacy of the home.)

Second, Chinese parents believe that their kids owe them everything. The reason for this is a little unclear, but it’s probably a combination of Confucian filial piety and the fact that the parents have sacrificed and done so much for their children. (And it’s true that Chinese mothers get in the trenches, putting in long grueling hours personally tutoring, training, interrogating, and spying on their kids.) Anyway, the understanding is that Chinese children must spend their lives repaying their parents by obeying them and making them proud.

By contrast, I don’t think most Westerners have the same view of children being permanently indebted to their parents. My husband, Jed, actually has the opposite view. “Children don’t choose their parents,” he once said to me. “They don’t even choose to be born. It’s parents who foist life on their kids, so it’s the parents’ responsibility to provide for them. Kids don’t owe their parents anything. Their duty will be to their own kids.” This strikes me as a terrible deal for the Western parent.

Third, Chinese parents believe that they know what is best for their children and therefore override all of their children’s own desires and preferences. That’s why Chinese daughters can’t have boyfriends in high school and why Chinese kids can’t go to sleepaway camp. It’s also why no Chinese kid would ever dare say to their mother, “I got a part in the school play! I’m Villager Number Six. I’ll have to stay after school for rehearsal every day from 3:00 to 7:00, and I’ll also need a ride on weekends.” God help any Chinese kid who tried that one.

Don’t get me wrong: It’s not that Chinese parents don’t care about their children. Just the opposite. They would give up anything for their children. It’s just an entirely different parenting model.

... Western parents worry a lot about their children’s self-esteem. But as a parent, one of the worst things you can do for your child’s self-esteem

is to let them give up. On the flip side, there's nothing better for building confidence than learning you can do something you thought you couldn't.

There are all these new books out there portraying Asian mothers as scheming, callous, overdriven people indifferent to their kids' true interests. For their part, many Chinese secretly believe that they care more about their children and are willing to sacrifice much more for them than Westerners, who seem perfectly content to let their children turn out badly. I think it's a misunderstanding on both sides. All decent parents want to do what's best for their children. The Chinese just have a totally different idea of how to do that.

Western parents try to respect their children's individuality, encouraging them to pursue their true passions, supporting their choices, and providing positive reinforcement and a nurturing environment. By contrast, the Chinese believe that the best way to protect their children is by preparing them for the future, letting them see what they're capable of, and arming them with skills, work habits, and inner confidence that no one can ever take away.

• • •

Comprehension

1. What does Chua mean when she says, "What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you're good at it" (6)? Do you agree with her?
2. Does Chua's husband agree or disagree with her child-rearing methods? Why does he react the way he does?
3. According to Chua, why are Chinese parents able to do things that Western parents cannot?
4. How does Chua respond to the charge that Chinese parents don't care about their children?
5. According to Chua, how do Chinese child-rearing practices prepare children for life?

Purpose and Audience

1. What preconceptions about Chinese mothers does Chua think Westerners have? Do you think she is right about this?
2. Does Chua seem to expect her readers to be receptive, hostile, or neutral to her ideas? What evidence can you find to support your impression? How do you know?
3. What is Chua's thesis? Where does she state it?
4. In an interview, Chua said that the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*, not she, chose the title of her essay. Why do you think the editors chose the title they did? What title do you think Chua would have chosen? What title would you give the essay?

Style and Structure

1. Why does Chua begin her essay with a list of things her two daughters were not allowed to do as they were growing up? How do you think she expects readers to react to this list? How do you react?
2. Is this essay a point-by-point comparison, a subject-by-subject comparison, or a combination of the two organizational strategies? Why does Chua arrange her comparison the way she does?
3. What evidence does Chua present to support her view that there are marked differences between the parenting styles of Chinese and Western parents?
4. Chua was born in the United States. Does this fact undercut her conclusions about the differences between Western and Chinese child-rearing? Explain.
5. What points does Chua emphasize in her conclusion? How else could she have ended her essay?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

stereotypically (1)	ostracized (8)
prodigies (1)	mediocre (12)
squeamishness (5)	fragility (12)
foster (5)	aptitude (13)
fortitude (6)	interrogating (16)
tenacious (6)	callous (21)
2. In paragraph 2, Chua says she is using the terms “Chinese mother” and “Western parents” loosely. What does she mean? How does she define these two terms? How would you define them?

Journal Entry

Do you think Chua’s essay perpetuates a cultural stereotype? Why or why not?

Writing Workshop

1. Write an essay in which you compare your upbringing to that of Chua’s daughters. Were your parents “Western” or “Chinese” parents (or, were they a combination of the two)? In your thesis, take a stand on the question of which kind of parent is “superior.” Use examples from your childhood to support your thesis.
2. **Working with Sources.** Read the poem “Suicide Note” by Janice Mirikitani (page 366). Then, write an essay in which you compare Chua’s positive view of Asian child-rearing practices with the feelings expressed by the

speaker in Mirikitani's poem. Be sure to document any material that you borrow from the two sources and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)

3. When Chua's essay was published, it elicited thousands of responses, many of which were negative. For example, some readers thought that her parenting methods were tantamount to child abuse, while some readers admired Chua for her resolve and her emphasis on hard work, and others said that her methods reminded them of their own upbringings. Chua herself responded to readers' comments by saying that her "tough love" approach was grounded in her desire to make sure her children were the best that they could be. Write an email to Chua in which you respond to her essay. Be sure to address each of her major points and to compare your opinions to hers.

Combining the Patterns

Throughout her essay, Chua includes **exemplification** paragraphs. Identify two exemplification paragraphs, and explain how they help Chua make her point about the superiority of Chinese mothers.

Thematic Connections

- "Pink Floyd Night School" (page 116)
- "Rice" (page 172)
- "Suicide Note" (page 366)
- "Mother Tongue" (page 466)

Writing Assignments for Comparison and Contrast

1. Find a description of the same news event in two different magazines or newspapers. Write a comparison-and-contrast essay discussing the similarities and differences between the two stories.
2. **Working with Sources.** In your local public library, locate two children's books on the same subject — one written in the 1950s and one written within the past ten years. Write an essay discussing which elements are the same and which are different. Include a thesis statement about the significance of the differences between the two books. Make sure that you document all material you take from the two books and that you include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
3. Write an essay about a relative or friend you have known since you were a child. Consider how your opinion of this person is different now from what it was then.
4. Write an essay comparing and contrasting the expectations that college professors and high school teachers have for their students. Cite your own experiences as examples.
5. Since you started college, how have you changed? Write an essay that answers this question.
6. Taking careful notes, watch a local television news program and then a national news broadcast. Write an essay comparing the two programs, paying particular attention to the news content and to the journalists' broadcasting styles.
7. Write an essay comparing your own early memories of school with those of a parent or an older relative.
8. How are the attitudes toward education different among students who work to finance their own education and students who do not? Your thesis statement should indicate what differences exist and why.
9. Compare and contrast the college experiences of commuters and students who live in dorms on campus. Interview people in your classes to use as examples.
10. Write an essay comparing any two groups that have divergent values — vegetarians and meat eaters or smokers and nonsmokers, for example.
11. How is being a participant — playing a sport or acting in a play, for instance — different from being a spectator? Write a comparison-and-contrast essay in which you answer this question.

Collaborative Activity for Comparison and Contrast

Form groups of four students each. Assume your college has hired these groups as consultants to suggest solutions for several problems students

have been complaining about. Select the four areas — food, campus safety, parking, and class scheduling, for example — you think need improvement. Then, as a group, write a short report to your college describing the present conditions in these areas, and compare them to the improvements you envision. (Be sure to organize your report as a comparison-and-contrast essay.) Finally, have one person from each group read the group's report to the class. Decide as a class which group has the best suggestion.

Definition

What Is Definition?

A **definition** tells what a term means and how it differs from other terms in its class. In the following paragraph from “Altruistic Behavior,” anthropologist Desmond Morris defines *altruism*, the key term of his essay.

Topic sentence

Extended definition defines term by enumeration and negation

Altruism is the performance of an unselfish act. As a pattern of behavior, this act must have two properties: it must benefit someone else, and it must do so to the disadvantage of the benefactor. It is not merely a matter of being helpful; it is helpfulness at a cost to yourself.

Most people think of definition in terms of print or online dictionaries, which give brief, succinct explanations – called **formal definitions** – of what words mean. But definition also includes explaining what something, or even someone, *is* – that is, its essential nature. Sometimes a definition requires a paragraph, an essay, or even a whole book. These longer, more complex definitions are called **extended definitions**.

Understanding Formal Definitions

Look at any dictionary, and you will notice that all definitions have a standard three-part structure. First, they present the *term* to be defined, then the general *class* it is a part of, and finally the *qualities that differentiate* it from the other terms in the same class.

TERM	CLASS	DIFFERENTIATION
behaviorism	a theory	that regards the objective facts of a subject's actions as the only valid basis for psychological study
cell	a unit of protoplasm	with a nucleus, cytoplasm, and an enclosing membrane

naturalism	a literary movement	whose original adherents believed that writers should treat life with scientific objectivity
mitosis	a process	of nuclear division of cells, consisting of prophase, metaphase, anaphase, and telophase
authority	a power	to command and require obedience

Understanding Extended Definitions

Many extended-definition essays include short formal definitions like those in dictionaries. In such an essay, a brief formal definition can introduce readers to the extended definition, or it can help to support the essay's thesis. However, an extended definition does not follow a set **pattern of development**. Instead, it uses whatever strategies best suit the writer's purpose, the term being defined, and the writing situation. In fact, any one (or more than one) of the essay patterns illustrated in this book can be used to structure a definition essay.

Using Definition

Providing a formal definition of each term you use is usually not necessary or desirable. Readers will either know what a word means or be able to look it up. Sometimes, however, defining a term is essential. On an exam, for example, you might be asked to define *behaviorism*; tell what a *cell* is; explain the meaning of the literary term *naturalism*; include a comprehensive definition of *mitosis* in your answer; or define *authority*. Such exam questions cannot always be answered in a sentence or two. In fact, the definitions they call for often require a full paragraph — or even several paragraphs.

Extended definitions are useful in many academic assignments besides exams. For example, definitions can explain abstractions such as *freedom*, controversial terms such as *right to life*, or **slang** terms (informal expressions whose meanings may vary from locale to locale or change as time passes). In a particular writing situation, a definition may be essential because a term has more than one meaning, because you are using it in an unusual way, because you are fairly certain the term will be unfamiliar to your readers, or because it is central to your discussion.

Planning a Definition Essay

Developing a Thesis Statement

The thesis of a definition essay should do more than simply identify the term to be defined — and more than just define it. The thesis statement needs to make clear to readers the larger purpose for which you are defining

the term. For example, assume you set out to write an extended definition of *behaviorism*. If your goal is to show its usefulness for treating patients with certain psychological disorders, a statement like “This essay will define behaviorism” will not be very helpful. Even a formal definition — “Behaviorism is a theory that regards the objective facts of a subject’s actions as the only valid basis for psychological study” — is not enough. Your thesis needs to suggest the *value* of this kind of therapy, not just tell what it is — for example, “Contrary to critics’ objections, behaviorism is a valid approach for treating a wide variety of psychological dysfunctions.”

Deciding on a Pattern of Development

You can organize a definition essay according to one or more of the patterns of development described in this book. As you plan your essay and jot down your ideas about the term or subject you will define, you will see which other patterns are most useful. For example, the formal definitions of the five terms discussed on page 490 could be expanded with five different patterns of development:

- **Exemplification** To explain *behaviorism*, you could give **examples**. Carefully chosen cases could show how this theory of psychology applies to different situations. These examples could help readers see exactly how behaviorism works and what it can and cannot account for. Often, examples are the clearest way to explain something. Defining dreams as “the symbolic representation of mental states” might convey little to readers who do not know much about psychology, but a few examples would help you make your meaning clear. Many students have dreams about taking exams — perhaps dreaming that they are late for the test, that they remember nothing about the course, or that they are writing their answers in disappearing ink. You might explain the nature of dreams by interpreting these particular dreams, which may reflect anxiety about a course or about school in general.

- **Description** You can explain the nature of something by **describing** it. For example, the concept of a *cell* is difficult to grasp from just a formal definition, but your readers would understand the concept more clearly if you were to describe what a cell looks like, possibly with the aid of a diagram or two. Concentrating on the cell membrane, cytoplasm, and nucleus, you could detail each structure’s appearance and function. These descriptions would enable readers to visualize the whole cell and understand its workings. Of course, description involves more than the visual: a definition of a tsunami might describe the sounds and the appearance of this enormous ocean wave, and a definition of Parkinson’s disease might include a description of how its symptoms affect a patient.

- **Comparison and contrast** An extended definition of *naturalism* could use a **comparison-and-contrast** structure. Naturalism is one of several major movements in American literature, so its literary aims could

be contrasted with those of other literary movements, such as romanticism or realism. Or, you might compare and contrast the plots and characters of several naturalistic works with those of romantic or realistic works. Anytime you need to define something unfamiliar, you can compare it to something familiar to your readers. For example, your readers may never have heard of the Chinese dish sweet-and-sour cabbage, but you can help them imagine it by saying it tastes something like cole slaw. You can also define a thing by contrasting it with something unlike it, especially if the two have some qualities in common. For instance, one way to explain the British sport of rugby is by contrasting it with American football, which is not as violent.

- **Process** Because mitosis is a process, an extended definition of *mitosis* should be organized as a **process explanation**. By tracing the process from stage to stage, you would clearly define this type of cell division for your readers. Process is also a suitable pattern for defining objects in terms of what they do. For example, because a computer carries out certain processes, an extended definition of a computer would probably include a process explanation.

- **Classification and division** You could define *authority* by using **classification and division**. Basing your extended definition on the model developed by the German sociologist Max Weber, you could divide the class *authority* into the subclasses *traditional authority*, *charismatic authority*, and *legal-bureaucratic authority*. By explaining each type of authority, you could clarify this very broad term for your readers. In both extended and formal definitions, classification and division can be very useful. By identifying the class something belongs to, you are explaining what kind of thing it is. For instance, *monetarism* is an economic theory; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a novel; and *emphysema* is a disease. Likewise, by dividing a class into subclasses, you are defining something more specifically. Emphysema, for instance, is a disease of the lungs and can therefore be classified with tuberculosis but not with appendicitis.

Phrasing Your Definition

Whatever form your definitions take, make certain that they clearly define your terms. Be sure to provide a true definition, not just a descriptive statement such as “Happiness is a four-day weekend.” Also, remember that repetition is not definition, so don’t include the term you are defining in your definition. For instance, the statement “Abstract art is a school of artists whose works are abstract” clarifies nothing for your readers. Finally, define as precisely as possible. Name the class of the term you are defining — “mitosis is a *process* of cell division” — and define this class as narrowly and as accurately as you can, clearly differentiating your term from other members of its class. Careful attention to the language and structure of your definition will help readers understand your meaning.

Structuring a Definition Essay

Like other essays, a definition essay should have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Although a formal definition strives for objectivity, an extended definition usually does not. Instead, it is likely to define a term in a way that reflects your attitude toward the subject or your reason for defining it. For example, your extended-definition paper about literary *naturalism* might argue that the significance of this movement's major works has been underestimated by literary scholars. Similarly, your definition of *authority* might criticize its abuses. In such cases, the **thesis statement** provides a focus for your definition essay, showing readers your approach to the definition.

The **introduction** identifies the term to be defined, perhaps presents a brief formal definition, and goes on to state the essay's thesis. The body of the essay expands the definition, using any one (or several) of the patterns of development explained and illustrated in this text.

In addition to using various patterns of development, you can expand the **body** of your definition by using any of the following strategies:

- You can define a term by using **synonyms** (words with similar meanings).
- You can define a term by using **negation** (telling what it is *not*).
- You can define a term by using **enumeration** (listing its characteristics).
- You can define a term by using an **analogy** (identifying similarities between an unfamiliar term and something likely to be more familiar to readers).
- You can define a term by discussing its **origin and development** (the word's derivation, original meaning, and usages).

NOTE: If you are describing something that is unfamiliar to your readers, you can also include a **visual** — a drawing, painting, diagram, or photograph — to supplement your definition.

Your essay's **conclusion** reminds readers why you have chosen to define the term, perhaps restating your thesis.

Suppose your assignment is to write a short paper for your introductory psychology course. You decide to examine *behaviorism*. Of course, you can define the word in one sentence, or possibly two. But to explain the *concept* of behaviorism and its status in the field of psychology, you must go beyond the dictionary.

Now, you have to decide what kinds of explanations are most suitable for your topic and for your intended audience. If you are trying to define *behaviorism* for readers who know very little about psychology, you might use analogies that relate behaviorism to your readers' experiences, such as how they were raised or how they train their pets. You might also use examples, but the examples would relate not to psychological experiments or clinical

treatment but to experiences in everyday life. If, however, you are directing your paper to your psychology instructor, who obviously already knows what behaviorism is, your purpose is to show that you know, too. One way to do this is to compare behaviorism with other psychological theories; another way is to give examples of how behaviorism works in practice; still another is to briefly summarize the background and history of the theory. (In a long paper, you might use all of these strategies.)

After considering your paper's scope and audience, you might decide that because behaviorism is somewhat controversial, your best strategy is to supplement a formal definition with examples showing how behaviorist assumptions and methods are applied in specific situations. These examples, drawn from your class notes and textbook, would support your thesis that behaviorism is a valid approach for treating certain psychological dysfunctions. Together, your examples would define *behaviorism* as it is understood today.

An informal outline for your essay might look like this:

SAMPLE OUTLINE: Definition

Introduction:	Thesis statement — Contrary to its critics' objections, behaviorism is a valid approach for treating a wide variety of psychological dysfunctions.
Background:	Definition of behaviorism, including its origins and evolution
First example:	The use of behaviorism to help psychotics function in an institutional setting
Second example:	The use of behaviorism to treat neurotic behavior, such as chronic anxiety, a phobia, or a pattern of destructive acts
Third example:	The use of behaviorism to treat normal but antisocial or undesirable behavior, such as heavy smoking or overeating
Conclusion:	Restatement of thesis or review of key points

Notice how the three examples in this paper define behaviorism with the kind of complexity, detail, and breadth that a formal definition could not duplicate. This definition is more like a textbook explanation — and, in fact, textbook explanations are often written as extended definitions.

Revising a Definition Essay

When you revise a definition essay, consider the items on the revision checklist on page 68. In addition, pay special attention to the items on the following checklist, which apply specifically to revising definition essays.



REVISION CHECKLIST

Definition

- Does your assignment call for definition?
- Does your essay include a clearly stated thesis that identifies the term you will define and tells readers why you are defining it?
- Have you included a formal definition of your subject? Have you defined other key terms that may not be familiar to your readers?
- Have you used appropriate patterns of development to expand your definition?
- Do you need to use other strategies — such as synonyms, negation, enumeration, or analogies — to expand your definition?
- Do you need to discuss the origin and development of the term you are defining?
- Do you need to include a visual?

Editing a Definition Essay

When you edit your definition essay, follow the guidelines on the editing checklists on pages 85, 88, and 90. In addition, focus on the grammar, mechanics, and punctuation issues that are particularly relevant to definition essays. One of these issues — avoiding the phrases *is when* and *is where* in formal definitions — is discussed below.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

Avoiding *is when* and *is where*

Many extended definitions include a one-sentence formal definition. As you have learned, such definitions must include the term you are defining, the class to which the term belongs, and the characteristics that distinguish the term from other terms in the same class.

Sometimes, however, when you are defining a term or concept, you may find yourself departing from this set structure and using the phrase *is when* or *is where*. If so, your definition is not complete because it omits the term's class. (In fact, the use of *is when* or *is where* indicates that you are actually presenting an example of the term and not a definition.)

You can avoid this error by making certain that the form of the verb *be* in your definition is always followed by a noun.

INCORRECT: As described in the essay “The Untouchable,” *prejudice* is when someone forms an irrational bias or negative opinion of a person or group (Mahtab 496).

CORRECT: As described in the essay “The Untouchable,” *prejudice* is an irrational bias or negative opinion of a person or group (Mahtab 496).

INCORRECT: According to Meghan Daum, *celebrity* is where you don't buy your own groceries (511).

CORRECT: According to Meghan Daum, *celebrities* are people who “don't buy their own groceries” (511).

For more practice in avoiding faulty constructions, visit the resources for Chapter 13 at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.



EDITING CHECKLIST

Definition

- Have you avoided using *is when* and *is where* in your formal definitions?
- Have you used the present tense for your formal definition — even if you have used the past tense elsewhere in your essay?
- In your formal definition, have you italicized the term you are defining and placed the definition itself in quotation marks?

A STUDENT WRITER: Definition

The following student essay, written by Ajoy Mahtab for a composition course, defines the untouchables, members of a caste that is shunned in India. In his essay, Ajoy, who grew up in Calcutta, presents a thesis that is sharply critical of the practice of ostracizing untouchables. Note that he includes a photograph to help readers understand the unfamiliar term he is defining.

The Untouchable

*Introduction:
background*

A word that is extremely common in India yet uncommon 1
to the point of incomprehension in the West is the word
untouchable. It is a word that has had very sinister connotations
throughout India's history. A rigorously worked-out caste system
has traditionally existed in Indian society. At the top of the social
ladder sat the Brahmins, the clan of the priesthood. These people
had renounced the material world for a spiritual one. Below them
came the Kshatriyas, or the warrior caste. This caste included
the kings and all their nobles along with their armies. Third on
the social ladder were the Vaishyas, who were the merchants of
the land. Trade was their only form of livelihood. Last came the
Shudras — the menials. Shudras were employed by the prosperous
as sweepers and laborers. Originally a person's caste was
determined only by his profession. Thus, if the son of a merchant
joined the army, he automatically converted from a Vaishya to a
Kshatriya. However, the system soon became hereditary and rigid.
Whatever one's occupation, one's caste was determined from birth
according to the caste of one's father.

Outside of this structure were a group of people, human 2
beings treated worse than dogs and shunned far more than lepers,
people who were not considered even human, people who defiled



Fig. 1. Sprague, Sean. *Untouchable Woman Sweeping in Front of Her House in a Village in Tamil Nadu, India*. 2003. The Image Works. Web. 4 Nov. 2011.

Formal definition

Historical background

with their very touch. These were the Achhoots: the untouchables, one of whom is shown in fig. 1. The word *untouchable* is commonly defined as “that which cannot or should not be touched.” In India, however, it was taken to a far greater extreme. The untouchables of a village lived in a separate community downwind of the borders of the village. They had a separate water supply, for they would make the village water impure if they were to drink from it. When they walked, they were made to bang two sticks together continuously so that passersby could hear them coming and thus avoid an untouchable’s shadow. Tied to their waists, trailing behind them, was a broom that would clean the ground they had walked on. The penalty for not following these or any other rules was death for the untouchable and, in many instances, for the entire untouchable community.

Present situation

One of the pioneers of the fight against untouchability was 3 Mahatma Gandhi. Thanks to his efforts and those of many others, untouchability no longer presents anything like the horrific picture described above. In India today, in fact, recognition of

untouchability is punishable by law. Theoretically, there is no such thing as untouchability anymore. But old traditions linger on, and a deep-rooted fear passed down from generation to generation does not disappear overnight. Even today, caste is an important factor in most marriages. Most Indian surnames reveal a person's caste immediately, so it is a difficult thing to hide. The shunning of the untouchable is more prevalent in South India, where people are much more devout, than in the North. Some people would rather starve than share food and water with an untouchable. This concept is very difficult to accept in the West, but it is true all the same.

Example

I remember an incident from my childhood. I could not have been more than eight or nine at the time. I was on a holiday staying at my family's house on the river Ganges. A festival was going on, and, as is customary, we were giving the servants small presents. I was handing them out when an old lady, bent with age, slowly hobbled into the room. She stood in the far corner of the room all alone, and no one so much as looked at her. When the entire line ended, she stepped hesitantly forward and stood in front of me, looking down at the ground. She then held a cloth stretched out in front of her. I was a little confused about how I was supposed to hand her her present, since both her hands were holding the cloth. Then, with the help of prompting from someone behind me, I learned that I was supposed to drop the gift into the cloth without touching the cloth itself. It was only later that I found out that she was an untouchable. This was the first time I had actually come face to face with such prejudice, and it felt like a slap in the face. That incident was burned into my memory, and I do not think I will ever forget it.

4

Conclusion begins

The word *untouchable* is not often used in the West, and when it is, it is generally used as a complimentary term. For example, an avid fan might say of an athlete, "He was absolutely untouchable. Nobody could even begin to compare with him." It seems rather ironic that a word could be so favorable in one culture and so negative in another. Why does a word that gives happiness in one part of the world cause pain in another? Why does the same word have different meanings to different people around the globe? Why do certain words cause rifts and others forge bonds? I do not think anyone can tell me the answers to these questions.

5

*Conclusion
continues*

Thesis statement

No actual parallel can be found today that compares to the horrors of untouchability. For an untouchable, life itself was a crime. The day was spent just trying to stay alive. From the misery of the untouchables, the world should learn a lesson: isolating and punishing any group of people is dehumanizing and immoral.

Points for Special Attention

Thesis Statement. Ajoy Mahtab's assignment was to write an extended definition of a term he assumed would be unfamiliar to his audience. Because he had definite ideas about the unjust treatment of the untouchables, Ajoy wanted his essay to have a strong thesis that communicated his disapproval. Still, because he knew his American classmates would need a good deal of background information before they would understand the context for such a thesis, he decided not to present it in his introduction. Instead, he decided to lead up to his thesis gradually and state it at the end of his essay. When other students in the class reviewed his draft, this subtlety was one of the points they reacted to most favorably.

Structure. Ajoy's introduction establishes the direction of his essay by introducing the word he will define; he then places this word in context by explaining India's rigid caste system. In paragraph 2, he gives the formal definition of the word *untouchable* and goes on to sketch the term's historical background. Paragraph 3 explains the status of the untouchables in present-day India, and paragraph 4 gives a vivid example of Ajoy's first encounter with an untouchable. As he begins his conclusion in paragraph 5, Ajoy brings his readers back to the word his essay defines. Here he uses two strategies to add interest: he contrasts a contemporary American usage of *untouchable* with its pejorative meaning in India, and he asks a series of **rhetorical questions** (questions asked for effect and not meant to be answered). In paragraph 6, Ajoy presents a summary of his position to lead into his thesis statement.

Patterns of Development. This essay uses a number of strategies commonly incorporated into extended definitions: it includes a formal definition, explains the term's origin, and explores some of the term's connotations. The essay also uses several familiar patterns of development. For instance, paragraph 1 uses classification and division to explain India's caste system; paragraphs 2 and 3 use brief examples to illustrate the plight of the untouchable; and paragraph 4 presents a narrative. Each of these patterns enriches the definition.

Working with Sources. Ajoy includes a **visual** — a photograph of an untouchable — to supplement his passages of description and to help readers understand this very unfamiliar concept. He places the photograph early in his essay, where it will be most helpful, and he refers to it in paragraph 2 with the phrase "one of whom is shown in fig. 1." In addition, he includes a caption below the photo with full source information.

Focus on Revision

Because the term Ajoy defined was so unfamiliar to his classmates, many of the peer editing worksheets students filled in asked for more information. One suggestion in particular — that he draw an **analogy** between the unfamiliar term *untouchable* and a more familiar concept — appealed to Ajoy as he planned his revision. Another student suggested that Ajoy could compare untouchables to other groups who have been shunned — for example, people with AIDS. Although Ajoy states in his conclusion that no parallel exists, an attempt to find common ground between untouchables and other groups could make his essay more meaningful to his readers — and bring home to them a distinctly alien idea. Such a connection could also make his conclusion especially powerful.



PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: Definition

1. What term is the writer defining? Does the essay include a formal definition? If so, where? If no formal definition is included, should one be added?
2. Why is the writer defining the term? Does the essay include a thesis statement that makes this purpose clear? If not, suggest revisions.
3. What patterns does the writer use to develop the definition? What other patterns could be used? Would a visual be helpful?
4. Does the essay define the term appropriately for its audience? Does the definition help you understand the meaning of the term?
5. Does the writer use **synonyms** to develop the definition? If so, where? If not, where could synonyms be used to help communicate the term's meaning?
6. Does the writer use **negation** to develop the definition? If so, where? If not, could the writer strengthen the definition by explaining what the term is not?
7. Does the writer use **enumeration** to develop the definition? If so, where? If not, where might the term's special characteristics be listed?
8. Does the writer use **analogies** to develop the definition? If so, where? Do you find these analogies helpful? What additional analogies might help readers understand the term more fully?
9. Does the writer explain the term's origin and development? If so, where? If not, do you believe this information should be added?
10. Reread the essay's introduction. If the writer uses a formal definition as an opening strategy, try to suggest an alternative opening.

The selections that follow use exemplification, description, narration, and other methods of developing extended definitions. The first selection, a visual text, is followed by questions designed to illustrate how definition can operate in visual form.

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

U.S. Census 2010 Form
(Questionnaire)

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

☐ No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

☒ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

☐ Yes, Puerto Rican

☐ Yes, Cuban

☒ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.*

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark ☒ one or more boxes.

☐ White

☐ Black, African Am., or Negro

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*

☐ Asian Indian

☐ Japanese

☐ Native Hawaiian

☐ Chinese

☐ Korean

☐ Guamanian or Chamorro

☐ Filipino

☐ Vietnamese

☐ Samoan

☐ Other Asian — *Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.*

☐ Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.*

☐ Some other race — *Print race.*

. . .

Reading Images

1. In a single complete sentence, define yourself in terms of your race, religion, or ethnicity (whatever is most important to you).

continued

2. Look at the U.S. Census questions on the form. Which boxes would you mark? Do you see this choice as an accurate expression of what you consider yourself to be? Explain.
3. Only recently has the Census Bureau permitted respondents to mark “one or more boxes” to indicate their ethnic identity. Do you think this option is a good idea?

Journal Entry

Why do you think the U.S. government needs to know “what [a] person considers himself/herself to be”? Do you think it is important for the government to know how people define themselves, or do you consider this information an unwarranted violation of a person’s privacy? Explain.

Thematic Connections

- “Indian Education” (page 142)
- “The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria” (page 232)
- “Two Ways to Belong in America” (page 404)
- “Mother Tongue” (page 466)

I Want a Wife

Judy Brady has published articles on many social issues. Diagnosed with breast cancer in 1980, she became active in the politics of cancer and has edited *Women and Cancer* (1990) and *One in Three: Women with Cancer Confront an Epidemic* (1991). She also helped found the Toxic Links Coalition, an organization devoted to lobbying for cancer and environmental issues.

Background on the status of women Brady has been active in the women's movement since 1969, and "I Want a Wife" first appeared in the premiere issue of the feminist *Ms.* magazine in 1972. That year represented perhaps the height of the feminist movement in the United States. The National Organization for Women, established in 1966, had hundreds of chapters around the country. The Equal Rights Amendment, barring discrimination against women, passed in Congress (although it was ratified by only thirty-five of the necessary thirty-eight states), and Congress also passed Title IX of the Education Amendments Act, which required equal opportunity (in sports as well as academics) for all students in any school that receives federal funding. At that time, women accounted for just under 40 percent of the labor force (up from 23 percent in 1950), a number that has grown to almost 50 percent today, in part because of the severe recession that started in 2008, which has caused more job losses for men than for women. Of mothers with children under age eighteen, fewer than 40 percent were employed in 1970; today, three-quarters work, 38 percent of them full-time and year-round. As for stay-at-home fathers, their numbers have increased from virtually zero to nearly 160,000.

I belong to that classification of people known as wives. I am A Wife. 1
And, not altogether incidentally, I am a mother.

Not too long ago a male friend of mine appeared on the scene fresh 2
from a recent divorce. He had one child, who is, of course, with his ex-wife. He is looking for another wife. As I thought about him while I was ironing one evening, it suddenly occurred to me that I, too, would like to have a wife. Why do I want a wife?

I would like to go back to school so that I can become economically 3
independent, support myself, and, if need be, support those dependent upon me. I want a wife who will work and send me to school. And while I am going to school I want a wife to take care of my children. I want a wife to keep track of the children's doctor and dentist appointments. And to keep track of mine, too. I want a wife to make sure my children eat properly and are kept clean. I want a wife who will wash the children's clothes and keep them mended. I want a wife who is a good nurturant attendant to my children, who arranges for their schooling, makes sure that they have an adequate social life with their peers, takes them to the park, the zoo,

etc. I want a wife who takes care of the children when they are sick, a wife who arranges to be around when the children need special care, because, of course, I cannot miss classes at school. My wife must arrange to lose time at work and not lose the job. It may mean a small cut in my wife's income from time to time, but I guess I can tolerate that. Needless to say, my wife will arrange and pay for the care of the children while my wife is working.

I want a wife who will take care of *my* physical needs. I want a wife who 4
will keep my house clean. A wife who will pick up after my children, a wife who will pick up after me. I want a wife who will keep my clothes clean, ironed, mended, replaced when need be, and who will see to it that my personal things are kept in their proper place so that I can find what I need the minute I need it. I want a wife who cooks the meals, a wife who is a *good* cook. I want a wife who will plan the menus, do the necessary grocery shopping, prepare the meals, serve them pleasantly, and then do the cleaning up while I do my studying. I want a wife who will care for me when I am sick and sympathize with my pain and loss of time from school. I want a wife to go along when our family takes a vacation so that someone can continue to care for me and my children when I need a rest and change of scene.

I want a wife who will not bother me with rambling complaints about a 5
wife's duties. But I want a wife who will listen to me when I feel the need to explain a rather difficult point I have come across in my course of studies. And I want a wife who will type my papers for me when I have written them.

I want a wife who will take care of the details of my social life. When my 6
wife and I are invited out by my friends, I want a wife who will take care of the babysitting arrangements. When I meet people at school that I like and want to entertain, I want a wife who will have the house clean, will prepare a special meal, serve it to me and my friends, and not interrupt when I talk about things that interest me and my friends. I want a wife who will have arranged that the children are fed and ready for bed before my guests arrive so that the children do not bother us. I want a wife who takes care of the needs of my guests so that they feel comfortable, who makes sure that they have an ashtray, that they are passed the hors d'oeuvres, that they are offered a second helping of the food, that their wine glasses are replenished when necessary, that their coffee is served to them as they like it. And I want a wife who knows that sometimes I need a night out by myself.

I want a wife who is sensitive to my sexual needs, a wife who makes 7
love passionately and eagerly when I feel like it, a wife who makes sure that I am satisfied. And, of course, I want a wife who will not demand sexual attention when I am not in the mood for it. I want a wife who assumes the complete responsibility for birth control, because I do not want more children. I want a wife who will remain sexually faithful to me so that I do not have to clutter up my intellectual life with jealousies. And I want a wife who understands that *my* sexual needs may entail more than strict adherence to monogamy. I must, after all, be able to relate to people as fully as possible.

If, by chance, I find another person more suitable as a wife than the 8
wife I already have, I want the liberty to replace my present wife with another one. Naturally, I will expect a fresh new life; my wife will take the

children and be solely responsible for them so that I am left free.

When I am through with school and have a job, I want my wife to quit working and remain at home so that my wife can more fully and completely take care of a wife's duties.

My God, who *wouldn't* want a wife?

“My God, who
wouldn't want a wife?”

9

10

• • •

Comprehension

1. In one sentence, define what Brady means by *wife*. Does this ideal wife actually exist? Explain.
2. List some of the specific duties of the wife Brady describes. Into what five general categories does Brady arrange these duties?
3. What complaints does Brady apparently have about the life she actually leads? To what does she seem to attribute her problems?
4. Under what circumstances does Brady say she would consider leaving her wife? What would happen to the children if she left?

Purpose and Audience

1. This essay was first published in *Ms.* magazine. In what sense is it appropriate for the audience of this feminist publication? Where else can you imagine it appearing?
2. Does this essay have an explicitly stated thesis? If so, where is it? If the thesis is implied, paraphrase it.
3. Do you think Brady *really* wants the kind of wife she describes? Explain your response.

Style and Structure

1. Throughout the essay, Brady repeats the words “I want a wife.” What is the effect of this repetition?
2. The first and last paragraphs of this essay are quite brief. Does this weaken the essay? Why or why not?
3. In enumerating a wife's duties, Brady frequently uses the verb *arrange*. What other verbs does she use repeatedly? How do these verbs help her make her point?
4. Brady never uses the personal pronouns *he* or *she* to refer to the wife she defines. Why not?
5. Comment on Brady's use of phrases such as *of course* (2, 3, and 7), *needless to say* (3), *after all* (7), *by chance* (8), and *naturally* (8). What do these expressions contribute to the sentences where they appear? To the essay as a whole?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.
nurturant (3) adherence (7)
replenished (6) monogamy (7)
2. Going beyond the dictionary definitions, decide what Brady means to suggest by each of the following words. Is she using any of these terms sarcastically? Explain.
proper (4) necessary (6) suitable (8)
pleasantly (4) demand (7) free (8)
bother (6) clutter up (7)

Journal Entry

Is Brady's 1972 characterization of a wife still accurate today? Which of the characteristics she describes have remained the same? Which have changed? Why?

Writing Workshop

1. Write an essay defining your ideal boss, parent, teacher, or pet.
2. Write an essay titled "I Want a Husband." Taking an **ironic** stance, use society's notions of the ideal husband to help you shape your definition.
3. Write a definition essay called "The Ideal Couple," in which you try to divide household chores and other responsibilities equitably between the two partners. (Your essay can be serious or humorous.) Develop your definition with examples.

Combining the Patterns

Like most definition essays, "I Want a Wife" uses several patterns of development. Which ones does it use? Which of these do you consider most important for supporting Brady's thesis? Why?

Thematic Connections

- "My Mother Never Worked" (page 121)
- "Sex, Lies, and Conversation" (page 423)
- Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848 (page 559)

Fame-iness

Essayist Meghan Daum (b. 1970) has contributed pieces to the *New Yorker*, the *Village Voice*, the *New York Times Book Review*, *Vogue*, and *Harper's Bazaar*, among many other popular periodicals. Some of these articles were collected in her first book, *My Misspent Youth* (2001). She writes a regular column for the op-ed page of the *Los Angeles Times* and has appeared on public radio's *Morning Edition* and *This American Life*. Noted for her sharp wit and entertaining observations on American culture, Daum has also published a novel, *The Quality of Life Report* (2003), which was named a *New York Times* Notable Book, and *Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived in That House* (2010), a book about her lifelong love affair with real estate.

Background on “fifteen minutes of fame” In a 1968 catalog essay accompanying his first international retrospective exhibition, pop artist and cultural icon Andy Warhol predicted — somewhat tongue-in-cheek — that “in the future everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes.” He was referring to the proliferation of mass media, particularly television, and the need to fill the airwaves with anything that would provide an audience for advertisers. (Warhol himself was obsessed with the concept of celebrity.) The slogan quickly became a catchphrase, with “fifteen minutes of fame” referring to any short-lived appearance in the limelight. Warhol couldn't have foreseen that, starting in the 1990s, reality television programs, the Internet, and a culture increasingly used to considering anyone a celebrity would bring his prediction even closer to reality.

Why is it that most celebrities in the culture today are people I've never heard of? I always thought fame had to do with being well known to the public, with being easily recognized on the street, with being, you know . . . famous.

If you asked me to name some famous people, I might offer up examples such as Bill Clinton, Meryl Streep, and Sting. If I spotted any one of them at the supermarket, it would probably warrant a call to my best friend to report what brand of peanut butter they were buying.

But these are also people who'd never go to the supermarket. The reason is that celebrities, at least according to my definition, don't buy their own groceries. They have their assistants do it, or they order special deliveries from organic farms or, more likely, they don't eat at all.

That's because they're not quite real people, which is exactly why we love them. Or at least we used to. These days it seems that only crotchety dinosaur types like me still harbor such provincial notions of what it means to be famous.

I know what you're thinking right about now: Here's another column about the vulgarity of contemporary celebrity culture, with sentences that start with phrases like “these days.” Believe me, I feel your nausea.

But I've also been feeling something else lately that goes beyond my cluelessness about who's on the cover of *In Touch Weekly*. Call it reverse indifference. You know how you can walk into a room that smells like garbage, initially be bowled over with disgust but eventually grow immune to the odor? That's the opposite of what's happened to my celebrity radar. Whereas I used to merely ignore news about the faux famous and their tabloid-targeted exploits, I now notice it and feel repulsed. And I'm pretty sure that's the whole idea.

Obviously, celebrity repulsion has been in the air in recent weeks. I don't need to name names, but suffice it to say that popular culture's approval rating (and, in turn, that of the media that can't get enough of it) is at an all-time low. Whether we're talking about a deceased gold-digger* or an apparently deranged astronaut** (and, be honest, we're still talking about both of them — all the time) it's pretty clear that it's never been a worse time to be famous. For one thing, the competition is stiff. (The Dixie Chicks, celebs with some old-school fame value, swept the Grammys, but we're still more interested in paternity claims and NASA-issue diapers.) For another thing, celebrity is just not as valuable as it used to be. By the look of things, just about anyone can get it — or at least something closely approximating it.

Not so long ago, you had to make a pretty strenuous effort to become well enough known to register as famous. If you were an actor, you auditioned your butt off. If you were a musician, you played in clubs for no money. Part of the allure of fame was that access was limited. You pretty much had to show up regularly on network television, in studio movies, or on top-40 radio. However, because that playing field was relatively small, once you got there it wasn't too hard to become a household name — if only for the allotted fifteen minutes.

Now I'm not sure there's such a thing as a household name anymore. Instead of fifteen minutes of fame, we get personalities who are famous in the eyes of maybe fifteen people. Fame is no longer about reaching the masses but about finding a niche audience somewhere.

This can, of course, be a very good thing, since the masses have never been known for their taste or intelligence. But there's a dangerous flip side to the democratization of fame. The YouTube/*American Idol*/MySpace regime may be providing new opportunities for genuinely talented, less conventional people, but it's providing even more opportunities for untalented, often downright annoying people. "Celebrity" now connotes a

* Eds. note — Anna Nicole Smith, former model and *Playboy* playmate who married an elderly billionaire and fought his children for his estate. After her death, several ex-lovers claimed to be the father of her baby daughter.

** Eds. note — Astronaut Lisa Marie Nowak, who faced kidnapping and attempted murder charges in 2007 after she drove nine hundred miles (reportedly wearing diapers so she wouldn't have to stop along the way) to confront a romantic rival.

mundanity that borders on tedium, not to mention that smelly territory of reverse indifference.

Merriam Webster's 2006 word of the year was Stephen Colbert's coin-¹¹ age of "truthiness," which describes our inclination to believe in ideas without regard to logic or evidence. Perhaps our definition of celebrity has taken a similar path. Now that the mystique of so many celebrities is rooted less in their accomplishments than in their ability to get our attention by provoking our disgust, perhaps it's not fame they're offering but "fame-iness."

Unlike actual fame, which involves some talent and hard work,¹² "fame-iness" requires little more than a willingness to humiliate oneself. Instead of a reward for a job well done, it's more like a punishment for cutting corners. And guess what? The audience gets punished too.

Talk about dirty work — no wonder only the unskilled seem to be ap-¹³ plying. Now if we could only stop reading their résumés.

• • •

Comprehension

1. According to Daum, what does it mean to be famous?
2. How does Daum define a celebrity?
3. What does Daum mean in paragraph 7 when she says, "it's pretty clear that it's never been a worse time to be famous"?
4. How does Daum see today's celebrities as different from those of years ago? Does she see this change as positive or negative?
5. What do you think Daum means in paragraph 6 by "tabloid-targeted exploits"? Can you give examples of such exploits?
6. In paragraph 9, Daum says, "Fame is no longer about reaching the masses but about finding a niche audience somewhere." Give some examples of what such a "niche audience" might be.
7. What does Daum see as the positive side of the "democratization of fame" (10)?
8. According to Daum, what is the difference between "actual fame" and "fame-iness"?

Purpose and Audience

1. This essay discusses fame and celebrities in general terms but gives very few examples. What examples does Daum provide? Why do you think she doesn't include more?
2. What is Daum's attitude toward her audience? How do you know? Does paragraph 5 offer any information that might help answer this question?

Style and Structure

1. Does Daum include a formal definition of *fame-iness* in her essay? If so, where? If not, supply one.
2. Where does Daum explain her term's origin?
3. Where does she define *fame-iness* by negation? By analogy?
4. What other terms are defined in this essay? Are all these definitions necessary?
5. What patterns of development does Daum use to develop her definition?
6. Evaluate Daum's opening and closing paragraphs. What strategies does she use? Should these paragraphs be developed further? If so, how?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

warrant (2)	allotted (8)
crotchety (4)	niche (9)
provincial (4)	mundanity (10)
suffice (7)	
2. In addition to *fame-iness*, Daum coins several other terms in this essay, including "reverse indifference" (6), "faux famous" (6), and "celebrity repulsion" (7). In your own words, define these terms.

Journal Entry

Do you agree with Daum that today, "the mystique of so many celebrities is rooted less in their accomplishments than in their ability to get our attention by provoking our disgust" (11)? Explain your feelings on this issue.

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** Write your own extended definition of *fame-iness*. Begin by summarizing Daum's views on how fame has changed, and then provide a formal definition of *fame-iness*. Develop your definition with examples of present-day celebrities who help to define the term. Be sure to acknowledge — and document — Daum's words and ideas, and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
2. Write an extended definition of *fame*, using classification to develop your essay. Begin by establishing three or four categories of fame, based on how a person earned his or her celebrity — for example, through talent, heroism, or criminal activity. Then, give a series of examples for each category. In your thesis, communicate your opinion about which kind of fame is most deserved. Be sure to include a formal definition of *fame* early in your essay.

Combining the Patterns

Daum's essay includes very few **examples** of celebrities. In which specific sections of the essay would you add such examples? Which particular celebrities would best illustrate Daum's points?

Thematic Connections

- "Pink Floyd Night School" (page 116)
- "Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police" (page 127)
- "Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts" (page 393)

The Wife-Beater

Gayle Rosenwald Smith, an attorney, currently practices family law. She has published articles in a variety of journals and periodicals and is coauthor of *What Every Woman Should Know about Divorce and Custody* (1998) and *Divorce and Money: Everything You Need to Know* (2004). The following essay appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in 2001.

Background on the “wife-beater” shirt As Smith notes here, *wife-beater* is a slang term for a type of sleeveless undershirt that has in recent years become fashionable. An Internet search of the term found a number of businesses that actually market such shirts as “wife-beaters.” The corresponding shirts for women are often called “boy-beaters.” A Texas-based firm offers adult-sized shirts emblazoned with the slogan, as well as “Lil’ Wife Beater” shirts for babies. The firm’s Web site — which plays the song “Smack My Bitch Up” — includes a background screen showing a woman being spanked and provides a link to a “Wife Beater Hall of Fame.” It also offers to send a second shirt at half price to any customer convicted of domestic violence (proof of conviction required, photos not acceptable). In another twist, a feminist retail site has offered a “Wife Beater Beater” shirt with a cartoon image of a woman kicking a man in the groin.

Everybody wears them. The Gap sells them. Fashion designers Dolce 1
and Gabbana have lavished them with jewels. Their previous greatest resurgence occurred in the 1950s, when Marlon Brando’s Stanley Kowalski wore one in Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire*. They are all the rage.

What are they called? 2

The name is the issue. For they are known as “wife-beaters.” 3

A Web search shows that kids nationwide are wearing the skinny- 4
ribbed white T-shirts that can be worn alone or under another shirt. Women have adopted them with the same gusto as men. A search of boutiques shows that these wearers include professionals who wear them, adorned with designer accessories, under their pricey suits. They are available in all colors, sizes, and price ranges.

Wearers under 25 do not seem to be disturbed by the name. But I 5
sure am.

It’s an odd name for an undershirt. And even though the ugly stereo- 6
types behind the name are both obvious and toxic, it appears to be cool to say the name without fear of (or without caring about) hurting anyone.

That the name is fueled by stereotype is now an academically estab- 7
lished fact, although various sources disagree on exactly when shirt and name came together. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines the term *wife-beater* as:

1. A man who physically abuses his wife and
2. Tank-style underwear shirts. Origin: based on the stereotype that physically abusive husbands wear that particular type of shirt.

The *World Book Dictionary* locates the origin of the term *wife-beater* in the 1970s, from the stereotype of the Midwestern male wearing an undershirt while beating his wife. The shirts are said to have been popular in the 1980s at all types of sporting events, especially ones at which one sits in the sun and develops “wife-beater marks.” The undershirts also attained popularity at wet T-shirt contests, in which the wet, ribbed tees accentuated contestants’ breasts.

In an article in the style section of the *New York Times*, Jesse Scheidlower, principal editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s American office, says the association of the undershirt and the term *wife-beater* arose in 1997 from varied sources, including gay and gang subcultures and rap music.

In the article, some sources argued that the reference in the term was not to spousal abuse per se but to popular-culture figures such as Ralph Cramden and Tony Soprano. And what about Archie Bunker?

It’s not just the name that worries me. Fashion headlines reveal that we want to overthrow ’90s grunge and return to shoulder pads and hardware-studded suits. Am I reading too much into a fashion statement that the return is also to male dominance where physical abuse is acceptable as a means of control?

There has to be a better term. After all, it’s a pretty rare piece of clothing that can make both men and women look sexier. You’d expect a term connoting flattery — not violence.

Wearers under 25 may not want to hear this, but here it is. More than 4 million women are victims of severe assaults by boyfriends and husbands each year. By conservative estimate, family violence occurs in 2 million families each year in the United States. Average age of the batterer: 31.

Possibly the last statistic is telling. Maybe youth today would rather ignore the overtones of the term *wife-beater*. It is also true, however, that the children of abusers often learn the behavior from their elders.

Therein lies perhaps the worst difficulty: that this name for this shirt teaches the wrong thing about men. Some articles quote women who felt the shirts looked great, especially on guys with great bodies. One woman stated that it even made guys look “manly.”

So *manly* equals *violent*? Not by me, and I hope not by anyone on any side of age 25.

• • •

Comprehension

1. Why is Smith “disturbed” (5) by the name “wife-beater”? Do you think her concern is justified?

2. In paragraph 3, Smith says, “The name is the issue”; in paragraph 11, she says, “It’s not just the name that worries me.” What does she mean by each statement? Do these two statements contradict each other?
3. What relationship does Smith see between the name of a sleeveless under-shirt and the prevalence of family violence? Does she believe a causal connection does — or could — exist? If so, which is the cause, and which is the effect?
4. In paragraph 12, Smith acknowledges that the shirt “can make both men and women look sexier.” Does this remark in any way undercut her credibility? Explain.
5. How, according to Smith, does calling a shirt a wife-beater teach women “the wrong thing about men” (15)?

Purpose and Audience

1. How do you think Smith expects her audience to react to her opening statement (“Everybody wears them”)?
2. Why do you think Smith wrote this essay? Does she hope to change the name of the T-shirt, or does she seem to have a more ambitious purpose? Explain.
3. Twice in her essay, Smith mentions a group she calls “wearers under 25” (5, 13). Does she seem to direct her remarks at these young adults or at older readers? At wearers of the shirts or at a more general audience?
4. Restate Smith’s thesis in your own words.

Style and Structure

1. Why do you think Smith begins her essay by explaining the popularity of sleeveless undershirts? Is this an effective opening strategy?
2. In paragraph 7, Smith reproduces a formal definition from the *Oxford Dictionary*. Why does she include this definition when she has already defined her term? What, if anything, does the formal definition add?
3. Where does Smith present information on the history of the wife-beater? Why does she include this kind of information?
4. Where does Smith quote statistics? Do you see this information as relevant or incidental to her argument?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

resurgence (1)	accentuated (8)
gusto (4)	per se (10)
toxic (6)	connoting (12)

2. In paragraph 12, Smith says, “There has to be a better term.” Can you think of a “better term” — one that does not suggest violence — for the shirt Smith describes?
3. Visit several different Internet sites — for example, dictionary.com and Merriam-Webster Online at m-w.com — and compare their definitions of the term *wife-beater*. How are these definitions alike? How are they different?

Journal Entry

Do you agree with Smith that the casual use of terms like *wife-beater* is dangerous, or do you think she is exaggerating the problem?

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** Relying primarily on description and exemplification, define an article of clothing that is essential to your wardrobe. Begin by checking Internet sites on fashion history, such as fashion-era.com, to learn the item’s history and the origin of its name. If you use information from a site in your essay, be sure to cite your source and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
2. Using comparison and contrast to structure your essay, define what a particular item of clothing means to you — and what it means to one of your parents.
3. Do members of your religious or ethnic group wear an item of clothing that is not well known to others — or not well understood by them? Define the article of clothing, and explain its significance and its history in terms that outsiders can understand.

Combining the Patterns

Do you think Smith should have spent more time in this essay on developing the **cause-and-effect** relationship, if any, between the “wife-beater” shirt and family violence? What additional information would she have to provide?

Thematic Connections

- “Four Tattoos” (page 226)
- “My First Conk” (page 281)
- “A Peaceful Woman Explains Why She Carries a Gun” (page 354)

Argumentation

What Is Argumentation?

Argumentation is a process of reasoning that asserts the soundness of a debatable position, belief, or conclusion. Argumentation takes a stand — supported by evidence — and urges people to share the writer’s perspective and insights. In the following paragraph from his essay “Holding Cell,” Jerome Groopman argues that with its decision to limit therapeutic cloning, the President’s Council on Bioethics has prevented scientists from carrying out important medical research that could possibly save lives.

Issue identified

The President’s Council on Bioethics, chaired by Dr. Leon R. Kass, presented its long-awaited report on human cloning to the White House. . . . The council unanimously advised against “cloning to produce children,” commonly called “reproductive cloning.” But on “cloning for biomedical research” — therapeutic cloning to produce stem cells to try to ameliorate disease — it split. Of the seventeen members, ten (including Kass) voted against it. They couched their rejection as a compromise since they called not for a permanent ban but for a four-year moratorium. This moratorium, according to the letter accompanying the report, would allow “a thorough federal review . . . to clarify the issues and foster a public consensus about how to proceed.” It would also give researchers time to seek alternative ways to generate stem cells. But for scientists and, more importantly, for the millions of patients with incurable maladies, the compromise is a painful disappointment. It shackles potentially lifesaving research and provides no clear framework to advance the ethical debate.

Background presents both sides of issue

Topic sentence (takes a stand)

Argumentation can be used to convince other people to accept (or at least acknowledge the validity of) your position; to defend your position, even if you cannot convince others to agree; or to question or refute a

position you believe to be misguided, untrue, dangerous, or evil (without necessarily offering an alternative).

Understanding Argumentation and Persuasion

Although the terms *persuasion* and *argumentation* are frequently used interchangeably, they do not mean the same thing. **Persuasion** is a general term that refers to how a writer influences an audience to adopt a belief or follow a course of action. To persuade an audience, a writer relies on various kinds of appeals — appeals based on emotion (*pathos*), appeals based on logic (*logos*), and appeals based on the character reputation of the writer (*ethos*).

Argumentation is the appeal to reason (*logos*). In an argument, a writer connects a series of statements so that they lead logically to a conclusion. Argumentation is different from persuasion in that it does not try to move an audience to action; its primary purpose is to demonstrate that certain ideas are valid and others are not. Moreover, unlike persuasion, argumentation has a formal structure: an argument makes points, supplies evidence, establishes a logical chain of reasoning, refutes opposing arguments, and accommodates the audience's views.

As the selections in this chapter demonstrate, however, most effective arguments combine two or more appeals: even though their primary appeal is to reason, they may also appeal to emotions. For example, you could use a combination of logical and emotional appeals to argue against lowering the drinking age in your state from twenty-one to eighteen. You could appeal to *reason* by constructing an argument leading to the conclusion that the state should not condone policies that have a high probability of injuring or killing citizens.

You could support your conclusion by presenting statistics showing that alcohol-related traffic accidents kill more teenagers than disease does. You could also cite a study showing that when the drinking age was raised from eighteen to twenty-one, fatal accidents declined. In addition, you could include an appeal to the *emotions* by telling a particularly sad story about an eighteen-year-old alcoholic or by pointing out how an increased number of accidents involving drunk drivers would cost some innocent people their lives. These appeals to your audience's emotions could strengthen your argument by widening its appeal. Keep in mind, however, that in an effective argument emotion does not take the place of logic; it supports and reinforces it.

The appeals you choose and how you balance them depend in part on your purpose and your sense of your audience. As you consider what strategies to use, remember that some extremely effective appeals are unfair. Although most people would agree that lies, threats, misleading state-

ments, and appeals to greed and prejudice are unacceptable ways of reaching an audience, such appeals are used in daily conversation, in political campaigns, and even in international diplomacy. Nevertheless, in your college writing you should use only those appeals that most people would consider fair. To do otherwise will undercut your audience's belief in your trustworthiness and weaken your argument.

Planning an Argumentative Essay

Choosing a Topic

In an argumentative essay, as in all writing, choosing the right topic is important. Ideally, you should have an intellectual or emotional stake in your topic. Still, you should be open-minded and willing to consider all sides of a question. If the evidence goes against your position, you should be willing to change your position. You should also be able, from the outset, to consider your topic from other people's viewpoints; this will help you determine what their beliefs are and how they are likely to react. You can then use this knowledge to build your case and to refute opposing viewpoints. If you cannot be open-minded, you should choose another topic you can deal with more objectively.

Other factors should also influence your selection of a topic. First, you should be well informed about your topic. In addition, you should choose an issue narrow enough to be treated in the space available to you or be willing to confine your discussion to one aspect of a broad issue. It is also important to consider your **purpose** — what you expect your argument to accomplish and how you wish your audience to respond. If your topic is so far-reaching that you cannot identify what you want to convince readers to think, or if your purpose is so idealistic that your expectations of their response are impossible or unreasonable, your essay will suffer.

Developing a Thesis

After you have chosen your topic, you are ready to state the position you will argue in the form of a **thesis**. Keep in mind that in an argumentative essay, your thesis must take a stand — in other words, it must be **debatable**. A good argumentative thesis states a proposition that at least some people will object to. Arguing a statement of fact or an idea that most people accept as self-evident is pointless. Consider the following thesis statement.

Education is the best way to address the problem of increased drug use among teenagers.

This thesis statement says that increased drug use is a problem among teenagers, that more than one possible solution to this problem exists,

and that education is a better solution than any other. In your argument, you will have to support each of these three points logically and persuasively.

A good way to test the suitability of your thesis for an argumentative essay is to formulate an **antithesis**, a statement that asserts the opposite position. If you think that some people would support the antithesis, you can be certain your thesis is indeed debatable.

Thesis:	Education is the best way to address the problem of increased drug use among teenagers.
Antithesis:	Education is not the best way to address the problem of increased drug use among teenagers.
Thesis:	Because immigrants have contributed much to the development of the United States, immigration quotas should be relaxed.
Antithesis:	Even though immigrants have contributed much to the development of the United States, immigration quotas should not be relaxed.

Analyzing Your Audience

Before writing any essay, you should analyze the characteristics, values, and interests of your audience. In argumentation, it is especially important to consider what beliefs or opinions your readers are likely to have and whether your audience is likely to be friendly, neutral, or hostile to your thesis.

It is probably best to assume that some, if not most, of your readers are at least **skeptical** — that they are open to your ideas but need to be convinced. This assumption will keep you from making claims you cannot support. If your position is controversial, you should assume that an informed and determined opposition is looking for holes in your argument.

In an argumentative essay, you face a dual challenge. You must appeal to readers who are neutral or even hostile to your position, and you must influence those readers so that they are more receptive to your viewpoint. For example, it would be relatively easy to convince college students that tuition should be lowered or to convince instructors that faculty salaries should be raised. You could be reasonably sure, in advance, that each group would agree with your position. But argument requires more than just telling people what they already believe. It would be much harder to convince college students that tuition should be raised to pay for an increase in instructors' salaries or to persuade instructors to forgo raises so that tuition can remain the same. Remember, your audience will not just take your word for the claims you make. You must provide evidence that will support your thesis and establish a line of reasoning that will lead logically to your conclusion.

Gathering and Documenting Evidence

All the points you make in your paper must be supported. If they are not, your audience will dismiss them as unfounded, irrelevant, or unclear. Sometimes you can support a statement with appeals to emotion, but most of the time you support your argument's points by appealing to reason — by providing **evidence**: facts and opinions in support of your position.

As you gather evidence and assess its effectiveness, keep in mind that evidence in an argumentative essay never proves anything conclusively. If it did, there would be no debate — and hence no point in arguing. The best that evidence can do is convince your audience that an assertion is reasonable and worth considering.

Kinds of Evidence. Evidence can be *fact* or *opinion*. **Facts** are statements that most people agree are true and that can be verified independently. Facts — including statistics — are the most commonly used type of evidence. It is a fact, for example, that fewer people per year were killed in U.S. automobile accidents in 2012 than in 1975. Facts may be drawn from your own experience as well as from reading and observation. It may, for instance, be a fact that you have had a serious automobile accident. Quite often, facts are more convincing when they are supplemented by **opinions**, or interpretations of facts. To connect your facts about automobile accidents to the assertion that the installation of side-impact airbags in all small trucks and buses, as well as in cars, could reduce deaths still further, you could cite the opinions of an expert — consumer advocate Ralph Nader, for example. His statements, along with the facts and statistics you have assembled and your own interpretations of those facts and statistics, could convince readers that your solution to the problem of highway deaths is reasonable.

Keep in mind that not all opinions are equally convincing. The opinions of experts are more convincing than are those of individuals who have limited knowledge of an issue. Your personal opinions can be excellent evidence (provided you are knowledgeable about your subject), but they are usually less convincing to your audience than an expert's opinion. In the final analysis, what is important is not just the quality of the evidence but also the credibility of the person offering it.

What kind of evidence might change readers' minds? That depends on the readers, the issue, and the facts at hand. Put yourself in the place of your readers, and ask what would make them receptive to your thesis. Why, for example, should a student agree to pay higher tuition? You might concede that tuition is high but point out that it has not been raised for three years while the college's costs have kept going up. The cost of heating and maintaining the buildings has increased, and professors' salaries have not, with the result that several excellent teachers have recently left the college for higher-paying jobs. Furthermore, cuts in federal and state funding have already caused a reduction in the number of courses offered. Similarly, how

could you convince a professor to agree to accept no raise at all, especially in light of the fact that faculty salaries have not kept up with inflation? You could say that because cuts in government funding have already reduced course offerings and because the government has also reduced funds for student loans, any further rise in tuition to pay faculty salaries would cause some students to drop out — and that in turn would eventually cost some instructors their jobs. As you can see, the evidence you use in an argument depends to a great extent on whom you want to persuade and what you know about them.

Criteria for Evidence. As you select and review material, choose your evidence with the following three criteria in mind:

1. Your evidence should be **relevant**. It should support your thesis and be pertinent to your argument. As you present evidence, be careful not to concentrate so much on a single example that you lose sight of the broader position you are supporting. Such digressions may confuse your readers. For example, in arguing for mandatory HIV testing for all health-care workers, one student made the point that AIDS in Africa remains at epidemic proportions. To illustrate this point, he discussed the bubonic plague in fourteenth-century Europe. Although interesting, this example was not relevant. To show its relevance, the student would have to link his discussion to his assertions about AIDS, possibly by comparing the spread of the bubonic plague in the fourteenth century to the spread of AIDS in Africa today.

2. Your evidence should be **representative**. It should represent the full range of opinions about your subject, not just one side. For example, in an essay arguing against the use of animals in medical experimentation, you would not just use information provided by animal rights activists. You would also use information supplied by medical researchers, pharmaceutical companies, and perhaps medical ethicists.

The examples and expert opinions you include should also be **typical**, not aberrant. Suppose you are writing an essay in support of building a trash-to-steam plant in your city. To support your thesis, you present the example of Baltimore, which has a successful trash-to-steam program. As you consider your evidence, ask yourself if Baltimore's experience with trash-to-steam is typical. Did other cities have less success? Take a close look at the opinions that disagree with the position you plan to take. If you understand your opposition, you can refute it effectively when you write your paper.

3. Your evidence should be **sufficient**. It should include enough facts, opinions, and examples to support your claims. The amount of evidence you need depends on the length of your paper, your audience, and your thesis. It stands to reason that you would use fewer examples in a two-page paper than in a ten-page research assignment. Similarly, an audience that is favorably disposed to your thesis might need only one or two examples to be convinced, whereas a skeptical or hostile audience would need many

more. As you develop your thesis, think about the amount of support you will need to write your paper. You may decide that a narrower, more limited thesis will be easier to support than a more inclusive one.

Documentation of Evidence. After you decide on a topic, you should begin to gather evidence. Sometimes you can use your own ideas and observations to support your claims. Most of the time, however, you will have to use the print and electronic resources of the library or search the Internet to locate the information you need.

Whenever you use such evidence in your paper, you have to **document** it by providing the source of the information. (When documenting sources, follow the documentation format recommended by the Modern Language Association, which is explained in Chapter 18 of this book.) If you don't document your sources, your readers are likely to dismiss your evidence, thinking that it may be inaccurate, unreliable, or simply false. **Documentation** gives readers the ability to evaluate the sources you cite and to consult them if they wish. When you document sources, you establish credibility by showing readers that you are honest and have nothing to hide.

Documentation also helps you avoid **plagiarism** — presenting the ideas or words of others as if they were your own. Certainly you don't have to document every idea you use in your paper. For example, **common knowledge** — information you could easily find in several reference sources — can be presented without documentation, and so can your own ideas. You must, however, document any use of a direct quotation and any ideas, statistics, charts, diagrams, or pictures that you obtain from your source. (See Chapter 17 for information on plagiarism.)

Dealing with the Opposition

When gathering evidence, keep in mind that you should not ignore arguments against your position. In fact, you should always try to identify the most obvious — and even the not-so-obvious — objections to your position. By directly addressing these objections in your essay, you will help convince readers that your own position is valid. This part of an argument, called **refutation**, is essential to making the strongest case possible.

You can **refute** opposing arguments by showing that they are unsound, unfair, or weak. Frequently, you will present evidence to show the weakness of your opponent's points and to reinforce your own case. Careful use of definition and cause-and-effect analysis may also prove effective. In the following passage from the classic essay "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell refutes an opponent's argument:

I said earlier that the decadence of our language is probably curable. Those who deny this would argue, if they produced an argument at all, that language merely reflects existing social conditions, and that we cannot influence its development by any direct tinkering with words and constructions.

So far as the general tone or spirit of a language goes, this may be true, but it is not true in detail. Silly words and expressions have often disappeared, though not through any evolutionary process but owing to the conscious actions of a minority.

In the excerpt above, Orwell begins by stating the point he wants to make, goes on to define the argument against his position, and then identifies the weakness of this opposing argument. Later in the essay, Orwell strengthens his argument by presenting examples that support his point.

When an opponent's argument is so compelling that it cannot be easily dismissed, you should concede its strength (admit that it is valid). By acknowledging that a point is well taken, you reinforce the impression that you are a fair-minded person. After conceding the strength of the opposing argument, try to identify its limitations and then move your argument to more solid ground. (Often an opponent's strong point addresses only *one* facet of a multifaceted problem.) Notice in the example above that Orwell concedes an opposing argument when he says, "So far as the general tone or spirit of a language goes, this may be true." Later in his discussion, he refutes this argument by pointing out its shortcomings.

When planning an argumentative essay, write down all the arguments against your thesis that you can think of. Then, as you gather your evidence, decide which points you will refute, keeping in mind that careful readers will expect you to refute the most compelling of your opponent's arguments. Be careful, however, not to distort an opponent's argument by making it seem weaker than it actually is. This technique, called creating a **straw man**, can backfire and actually turn fair-minded readers against you.

Understanding Rogerian Argument

Not all arguments are (or should be) confrontational. Psychologist Carl Rogers has written about how to argue without assuming an adversarial relationship. According to Rogers, traditional strategies of argument rely on confrontation – trying to prove that an opponent's position is wrong. With this method of arguing, one person is "wrong" and one is "right." By attacking an opponent and repeatedly hammering home the message that his or her arguments are incorrect or misguided, a writer forces the opponent into a defensive position. The result is conflict, disagreement, and frequently ill will and hostility.

Rogers recommends that you think of those who disagree with you as colleagues, not adversaries. With this approach, now known as **Rogsonian argument**, you enter into a cooperative relationship with opponents. Instead of aggressively refuting opposing arguments, you emphasize points of agreement and try to find common ground. You thus collaborate to find mutually satisfying solutions. By adopting a conciliatory attitude, you demonstrate your respect for opposing viewpoints and your willingness to compromise and work toward a position that both you and those who

disagree with you will find acceptable. To use a Rogerian strategy in your writing, follow the guidelines below.



CHECKLIST

Guidelines for Using Rogerian Argument

- Begin by summarizing opposing viewpoints.
- Carefully consider the position of those who disagree with you. What are their legitimate concerns? If you were in their place, how would you react?
- Present opposing viewpoints accurately and fairly. Demonstrate your respect for the ideas of those who disagree with you.
- Concede the strength of a compelling opposing argument.
- Acknowledge the concerns you and your opposition share.
- Point out to readers how they will benefit from the position you are defining.
- Present the evidence that supports your viewpoint.

Using Deductive and Inductive Arguments

In an argument, you move from evidence to a conclusion in two ways. One method, called **deductive reasoning**, proceeds from a general premise or assumption to a specific conclusion. Deduction is what most people mean when they speak of logic. Using strict logical form, deduction holds that if all the statements in the argument are true, the conclusion must also be true.

The other method of moving from evidence to conclusion is called **inductive reasoning**. Induction proceeds from individual observations to a more general conclusion and uses no strict form. It requires only that all the relevant evidence be stated and that the conclusion fit the evidence better than any other conclusion would.

Most written arguments use a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning, but it is simpler to discuss and illustrate them separately.

Using Deductive Arguments

The basic form of a deductive argument is a **syllogism**. A syllogism consists of a **major premise**, which is a general statement; a **minor premise**, which is a related but more specific statement; and a **conclusion**, which is drawn from those premises. Consider the following example.

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Major premise: | All Olympic runners are fast. |
| Minor premise: | Jesse Owens was an Olympic runner. |
| Conclusion: | Therefore, Jesse Owens was fast. |

As you can see, if you grant both the major and minor premises, then you must also grant the conclusion. In fact, it is the only conclusion you can properly draw. You cannot reasonably conclude that Jesse Owens was slow because that conclusion contradicts the premises. Nor can you conclude (even if it is true) that Jesse Owens was tall because that conclusion goes beyond the premises.

Of course, this argument seems obvious, and it is much simpler than an argumentative essay would be. In fact, a deductive argument's premises can be fairly elaborate. The Declaration of Independence, which appears later in this chapter, has at its core a deductive argument that could be summarized in this way:

Major premise:	Tyrannical rulers deserve no loyalty.
Minor premise:	King George III is a tyrannical ruler.
Conclusion:	Therefore, King George III deserves no loyalty.

The major premise is a statement that the Declaration claims is **self-evident** – so obvious that it needs no proof. Much of the Declaration consists of evidence to support the minor premise that King George is a tyrannical ruler. The conclusion, because it is drawn from those premises, has the force of irrefutable logic: the king deserves no loyalty from his American subjects, who are therefore entitled to revolt against him.

When a conclusion follows logically from the major and minor premises, then the argument is said to be **valid**. But if the syllogism is not logical, the argument is not valid, and the conclusion is not sound. For example, the following syllogism is not logical:

Major premise:	All dogs are animals.
Minor premise:	All cats are animals.
Conclusion:	Therefore, all dogs are cats.

Of course, the conclusion is absurd. But how did we wind up with such a ridiculous conclusion when both premises are obviously true? The answer is that the syllogism actually contains two major premises. (Both the major and minor premises begin with *all*.) Therefore, the syllogism is defective, and the argument is invalid. Consider the following example of an invalid argument:

Major premise:	All dogs are animals.
Minor premise:	Ralph is an animal.
Conclusion:	Therefore, Ralph is a dog.

Here, an error in logic occurs because the minor premise refers to a term in the major premise that is **undistributed** – it covers only some of the items in the class it denotes. (To be valid, the minor premise must refer to the term in the major premise that is **distributed** – it covers *all* the items in the class it denotes.) In the major premise, *dogs* is the distributed term; it designates *all dogs*. The minor premise, however, refers to *animals*, which is

undistributed because it refers only to animals that are dogs. As the minor premise establishes, Ralph is an animal, but it does not logically follow that he is a dog. He could be a cat, a horse, or even a human being.

Even if a syllogism is valid — that is, correct in its form — its conclusion will not necessarily be **true**. The following syllogism draws a false conclusion:

Major premise:	All dogs are brown.
Minor premise:	My poodle Toby is a dog.
Conclusion:	Therefore, Toby is brown.

As it happens, Toby is black. The conclusion is false because the major premise is false: many dogs are *not* brown. If Toby were actually brown, the conclusion would be correct, but only by chance, not by logic. To be **sound**, a syllogism must be both logical and true.

The advantage of a deductive argument is that if your audience accepts your major and minor premises, the force of logic should bring them to grant your conclusion. Therefore, you should try to select premises that you know your audience accepts or that are **self-evident** — that is, premises that most people believe to be true. Do not assume, however, that “most people” refers only to your friends and acquaintances. Consider, too, those who may hold different views. If you think your premises are too controversial or difficult to establish firmly, you should use inductive reasoning.

Using Inductive Arguments

Unlike deduction, induction has no distinctive form, and its conclusions are less definitive than those of syllogisms. Still, much inductive thinking (and writing based on that thinking) tends to follow a particular process.

- First, you decide on a question to be answered — or, especially in the sciences, a tentative answer to such a question, called a **hypothesis**.
- Then, you gather the evidence that is relevant to the question and that may be important to finding the answer.
- Finally, you move from your evidence to your conclusion by making an **inference** — a statement about the unknown based on the known — that answers the question and takes the evidence into account.

Here is a very simple example of the inductive process:

Question:	How did that living-room window get broken?
Evidence:	There is a baseball on the living-room floor. The baseball was not there this morning. Some children were playing baseball this afternoon. They were playing in the vacant lot across from the window.

They stopped playing a little while ago.
They aren't in the vacant lot now.

Conclusion: One of the children hit or threw the ball through the window; then, they all ran away.

The conclusion, because it takes all of the evidence into account, seems obvious. But if it turned out that the children had been playing volleyball, not baseball, this additional piece of evidence would make the conclusion doubtful. Even if the conclusion is believable, you cannot necessarily assume it is true: after all, the window could have been broken in some other way. For example, perhaps a bird flew against it, and perhaps the baseball in the living room had gone unnoticed all day, making the second piece of “evidence” on the list not true.

Considering several possible conclusions is a good way to avoid reaching an unjustified or false conclusion. In the preceding example, a hypothesis like this one might follow the question:

Hypothesis: One of those children playing baseball broke the living-room window.

Many people stop reasoning at this point, without considering the evidence. But when the gap between your evidence and your conclusion is too great, you may reach a conclusion that is not supported by the facts. This well-named error is called **jumping to a conclusion** because it amounts to a premature inductive leap. In induction, the hypothesis is merely the starting point. The rest of the inductive process continues as if the question were still to be answered — as in fact it is until all the evidence has been taken into account.

Because inductive arguments tend to be more complicated than the example on pages 535–536, it is not always easy to move from the evidence you have collected to a sound conclusion. Of course, the more pertinent information you gather, the smaller the gap between your evidence and your conclusion. Still, whether large or small, the crucial step from evidence to conclusion always involves what is called an **inductive leap**. For this reason, it is important to remember that inductive conclusions are just inferences and opinions (not facts). Therefore, inductive conclusions are never certain, only highly probable.

Using Toulmin Logic

Another approach for structuring arguments has been advanced by philosopher Stephen Toulmin. Known as **Toulmin logic**, this method tries to describe how the argumentative strategies a writer uses lead readers to respond the way they do. Toulmin puts forth a model that divides arguments into three parts: the *claim*, the *grounds*, and the *warrant*.

- The **claim** is the main point of the essay. Usually the claim is stated directly as the thesis, but in some arguments it may be implied.

- The **grounds** — the material a writer uses to support the claim — can be evidence (facts or expert opinion) or appeals to the emotions or values of the audience.
- The **warrant** is the inference that connects the claim to the grounds. It can be a belief that is taken for granted or an assumption that underlies the argument.

In its simplest form, an argument following Toulmin logic would look like this example.

Claim:	Carol should be elected class president.
Grounds:	Carol is an honor student.
Warrant:	A person who is an honor student would make a good class president.

When you formulate an argument using Toulmin logic, you can still use inductive and deductive reasoning. You derive your claim inductively from facts and examples, and you connect the grounds and warrant to your claim deductively. For example, the deductive argument in the Declaration of Independence that was summarized on page 534 can be represented as shown here.

Claim:	King George III deserves no loyalty.
Grounds:	King George III is a tyrannical ruler.
Warrant:	Tyrannical rulers deserve no loyalty.

As Toulmin points out, the clearer your warrant, the more likely readers will be to agree with it. Notice that in the two preceding examples, the warrants are very explicit.

Recognizing Fallacies

Fallacies are illogical statements that may sound reasonable or true but are actually deceptive and dishonest. When careful readers detect them, such statements can turn even a sympathetic audience against your position. Here are some of the more common fallacies that you should avoid.

Begging the Question. Begging the question is a logical fallacy that assumes that a statement is true when it actually requires proof. This tactic asks readers to agree that certain points are self-evident when in fact they are not.

Unfair and shortsighted legislation that limits free trade is a threat to the American economy.

Restrictions against free trade may or may not be unfair and shortsighted, but emotionally loaded language does not constitute proof. The statement begs the question because it assumes what it should be proving — that legislation that limits free trade is unfair and shortsighted.

Argument from Analogy. An **analogy** is a form of comparison that explains something unfamiliar by comparing it to something familiar. Although analogies can help explain abstract or unclear ideas, they do not constitute proof. An argument based on an analogy frequently ignores important dissimilarities between the two things being compared. When this occurs, the argument is fallacious.

The overcrowded conditions in some parts of our city have forced people together like rats in a cage. Like rats, they will eventually turn on one another, fighting and killing until a balance is restored. It is therefore necessary that we vote to appropriate funds to build low-cost housing.

No evidence is offered to establish that people behave like rats under these or any other conditions. Just because two things have some characteristics in common, you should not assume they are alike in other respects.

Personal Attack (Argument *Ad Hominem*). This fallacy tries to divert attention from the facts of an argument by attacking the motives or character of the person making the argument.

The public should not take seriously Dr. Mason's plan for improving county health services. He is a former alcoholic whose wife recently divorced him.

This attack on Dr. Mason's character says nothing about the quality of his plan. Sometimes a connection exists between a person's private and public lives — for example, in a case of conflict of interest. However, no evidence of such a connection is presented here.

Jumping to a Conclusion. Sometimes called a *hasty* or *sweeping generalization*, this fallacy occurs when a conclusion is reached on the basis of too little evidence.

Because our son benefited from home schooling, every child should be educated in this way.

Perhaps other children would benefit from home schooling, and perhaps not, but no conclusion about children in general can be reached on the basis of just one child's experience.

False Dilemma (Either/Or Fallacy). This fallacy occurs when a writer suggests that only two alternatives exist even though there may be others.

We must choose between life and death, between intervention and genocide. No one can be neutral on this issue.

An argument like this oversimplifies an issue and forces people to choose between extremes instead of exploring more moderate positions.

Equivocation. This fallacy occurs when the meaning of a key term changes at some point in an argument. Equivocation makes it seem as if a conclusion follows from premises when it actually does not.

As a human endeavor, computers are a praiseworthy and even remarkable accomplishment. But how human can we hope to be if we rely on computers to make our decisions?

The use of *human* in the first sentence refers to the entire human race. In the second sentence, *human* means “merciful” or “civilized.” By subtly shifting this term to refer to qualities characteristic of people as opposed to machines, the writer makes the argument seem more sound than it is.

Red Herring. This fallacy occurs when the focus of an argument is shifted to divert the audience from the actual issue.

The mayor has proposed building a new sports stadium. How can he even consider allocating millions of dollars to this scheme when so many professional athletes are being paid such high salaries?

The focus of this argument should be the merits of the sports stadium. Instead, the writer shifts to the irrelevant issue of athletes’ high salaries.

You Also (Tu Quoque). This fallacy asserts that an opponent’s argument has no value because the opponent does not follow his or her own advice.

How can that judge favor stronger penalties for convicted drug dealers? During his confirmation hearings, he admitted smoking marijuana when he was in college.

Appeal to Doubtful Authority. Often people will attempt to strengthen an argument with references to experts or famous people. These appeals are valid when the person referred to is an expert in the area being discussed. They are not valid, however, when the individuals cited have no expertise on the issue.

According to Diane Sawyer, interest rates will remain low during the next fiscal year.

Although Diane Sawyer is a respected journalist, she is not an expert in business or finance. Therefore, her pronouncements about interest rates are no more than a personal opinion or, at best, an educated guess.

Misleading Statistics. Although statistics are a powerful form of factual evidence, they can be misrepresented or distorted in an attempt to influence an audience.

Women will never be competent firefighters; after all, 50 percent of the women in the city’s training program failed the exam.

Here, the writer has neglected to mention that there were only two women in the program. Because this statistic is not based on a large enough sample, it cannot be used as evidence to support the argument.

Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc (After This, Therefore Because of This). This fallacy, known as *post hoc reasoning*, assumes that because two events occur close together in time, the first must be the cause of the second.

Every time a Republican is elected president, a recession follows. If we want to avoid another recession, we should elect a Democrat.

Even if it were true that recessions always occur during the tenure of Republican presidents, no causal connection has been established. (See pages 326–327.)

Non Sequitur (It Does Not Follow). This fallacy occurs when a statement does not logically follow from a previous statement.

Disarmament weakened the United States after World War I. Disarmament also weakened the United States after the Vietnam War. For this reason, the city's efforts to limit gun sales will weaken the United States.

The historical effects of disarmament have nothing to do with current efforts to control the sale of guns. Therefore, the conclusion is a *non sequitur*.

Using Transitions

Transitional words and phrases are extremely important in argumentative essays. Without these words and phrases, readers could easily lose track of your argument.

Argumentative essays use transitions to signal a shift in focus. For example, paragraphs that present the specific points in support of your argument can signal this purpose with transitions such as *first*, *second*, *third*, *in addition*, and *finally*. In the same way, paragraphs that refute opposing arguments can signal this purpose with transitions such as *still*, *nevertheless*, *however*, and *yet*. Transitional words and phrases — such as *therefore* and *for these reasons* — are also useful when you are presenting your argument's conclusions.

USEFUL TRANSITIONS FOR ARGUMENTATION

all in all	in conclusion
as a result	in other words
finally	in short
first, second, third	in summary
for example	nevertheless
for instance	on the one hand . . . on the other hand
for these reasons	still
however	therefore
in addition	thus
in brief	yet

A more complete list of transitions appears on page 57.

Structuring an Argumentative Essay

An argumentative essay, like other kinds of essays, has an **introduction**, a **body**, and a **conclusion**. However, an argumentative essay has its own special structure, one that ensures that ideas are presented logically and convincingly. The Declaration of Independence follows the typical structure of many classic arguments:

SAMPLE OUTLINE: Argumentation

Introduction:	Introduces the issue States the thesis
Body:	Induction — offers evidence to support the thesis Deduction — uses syllogisms to support the thesis States the arguments against the thesis and refutes them
Conclusion:	Restates the thesis in different words Makes a forceful closing statement

Jefferson begins the Declaration by presenting the issue that the document addresses: the obligation of the people of the American colonies to tell the world why they must separate from Great Britain. Next, Jefferson states his thesis that because of the tyranny of the British king, the colonies must replace his rule with another form of government. In the body of the Declaration, he offers as evidence twenty-eight examples of injustice endured by the colonies. Following the evidence, Jefferson refutes counterarguments by explaining how again and again the colonists have appealed to the British for redress, but without result. In his concluding paragraph, he restates the thesis and reinforces it one final time. He ends with a flourish: speaking for the representatives of the United States, he explicitly dissolves all political connections between England and America.

Not all arguments, however, follow this pattern. Your material, your thesis, your purpose, your audience, the type of argument you are writing, and the limitations of your assignment all help you determine the strategies you use. If your thesis is especially novel or controversial, for example, the refutation of opposing arguments may come first. In this instance, opposing positions might even be mentioned in the introduction — provided they are discussed more fully later in the argument.

Suppose your journalism instructor gives you the following assignment:

Select a controversial topic that interests you, and write a brief editorial about it. Direct your editorial to readers who do not share your views, and try to convince them that your position is reasonable. Be sure to acknowledge the view your audience holds and to refute possible criticisms of your argument.

You are well informed about one local issue because you have just read a series of articles on it. A citizens' group is lobbying for a local ordinance that

would authorize government funding for religious schools. Since you have also recently studied the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state in your American government class, you know you could argue fairly and strongly against the position taken by this group.

An informal outline of your essay might look like this:

SAMPLE OUTLINE: Argumentation

Issue introduced:	Should public tax revenues be spent on aid to religious schools?
Thesis statement:	Despite the pleas of citizen groups like Religious School Parents United, using tax dollars to support church-affiliated schools violates the U.S. Constitution.
Evidence (deduction):	Explain general principle of separation of church and state in the Constitution.
Evidence (induction):	Present recent examples of court cases interpreting and applying this principle.
Evidence (deduction):	Explain how the Constitution and the court cases apply to your community's situation.
Opposing arguments refuted:	Identify and refute arguments used by Religious School Parents United. Concede the point that religious schools educate many children who would otherwise have to be educated in public schools at taxpayers' expense. Then, explain the limitations of this argument.
Conclusion:	Restate the thesis; end with a strong closing statement.

Revising an Argumentative Essay

When you revise an argumentative essay, consider the items on the revision checklist on page 68. In addition, pay special attention to the items on the following checklist, which apply specifically to argumentative essays.



REVISION CHECKLIST

Argumentation

- Does your assignment call for argumentation?
- Have you chosen a topic you can argue about effectively?
- Do you have a debatable thesis?
- Have you considered the beliefs and opinions of your audience?
- Is your evidence relevant, representative, and sufficient?

- Have you documented evidence you have gathered from sources? Have you included a works-cited page?
- Have you made an effort to address your audience's possible objections to your position?
- Have you refuted opposing arguments?
- Have you used inductive or deductive reasoning (or a combination of the two) to move from your evidence to your conclusion?
- Have you avoided logical fallacies?
- Have you used appropriate transitional words and phrases?

Editing an Argumentative Essay

When you edit your argumentative essay, follow the guidelines on the editing checklists on pages 85, 88, and 90. In addition, focus on the grammar, mechanics, and punctuation issues that are particularly relevant to argumentative essays. One of these issues — using coordinating and subordinating conjunctions to link ideas — is discussed in the pages that follow.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

Using Coordinating and Subordinating Conjunctions

When you write an argumentative essay, you often have to use **conjunctions** — words that join other words or groups of words — to express the logical and sequential relationships between ideas in your sentences. Conjunctions are especially important because they help readers follow the logic of your argument. For this reason, you should be certain that the conjunctions you select clearly and accurately communicate the connections between the ideas you are discussing.

Using Coordinating Conjunctions A **compound sentence** is made up of two or more independent clauses (simple sentences) connected by a coordinating conjunction. **Coordinating conjunctions** join two independent clauses that express ideas of equal importance, and they also indicate how those ideas are related.

independent clause [People can disobey unjust laws], *independent clause* or [they can be oppressed by them].

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

and (*indicates addition*)
 but, yet (*indicate contrast or contradiction*)
 or (*indicates alternatives*)
 nor (*indicates an elimination of alternatives*)
 so, for (*indicate a cause-and-effect connection*)

According to Thomas Jefferson, the king has refused to let governors pass important laws, and he has imposed taxes without the consent of the people (554, 555).

Elizabeth Cady Stanton says that women are equal to men, but men think that they are superior to women (562).

Martin Luther King Jr. does not believe that all laws are just, nor does he believe that it is wrong to protest unjust laws (570, 571).

When you use a coordinating conjunction to join two independent clauses, always place a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

Using Subordinating Conjunctions A **complex sentence** is made up of one independent clause (simple sentence) and one or more dependent clauses. (A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence.) Subordinating conjunctions link dependent and independent clauses that express ideas of unequal importance, and they also indicate how those ideas are related.

independent clause
[According to Martin Luther King Jr., he led protests]
dependent clause
[so that he could fight racial injustice] (567).

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	
SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLAUSES
after, before, since, until, when, whenever, while	Time
as, because, since, so that	Cause or effect
even if, if, unless	Condition
although, even though, though	Contrast

“All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality” (King 571).

“If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood” (King 574).

“Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here” (King 577).

When you use a subordinating conjunction to join two clauses, place a comma after the dependent clause when it comes *before* the independent clause. Do not use a comma when the dependent clause comes *after* the independent clause.

When they signed the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson and the others knew they were committing treason. (*comma*)
Thomas Jefferson and the others knew they were committing treason when they signed the Declaration of Independence. (*no comma*)

For more practice in using coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, visit the resources for Chapter 14 at bedfordstmartins.com/patterns.



EDITING CHECKLIST

Argumentation

- Have you used coordinating conjunctions correctly to connect two or more independent clauses?
- Do the coordinating conjunctions accurately express the relationship between the ideas in the independent clauses?
- Have you placed a comma before the coordinating conjunction?
- Have you used subordinating conjunctions correctly to connect an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses?
- Do the subordinating conjunctions accurately express the relationship between the ideas in the dependent and independent clauses?
- Have you placed a comma after the dependent clause when it comes before the independent clause?
- Have you remembered not to use a comma when the dependent clause comes after the independent clause?

A STUDENT WRITER: Argumentation

The following editorial, written by Matt Daniels for his college newspaper, illustrates the techniques discussed earlier in this chapter.

An Argument against the Anna Todd Jennings Scholarship

Introduction

Summary of controversy

Thesis statement

Argument (deductive)

Recently, a dispute has arisen over the “Caucasian-restricted” Anna Todd Jennings scholarship.* Anna Jennings died in 1955, and her will established a trust that granted a scholarship of up to \$15,000 for a deserving student. Unfortunately, Jennings, who had certain racist views, limited her scholarship to “Caucasian students.” After much debate with family and friends, I, a white, well-qualified, and definitely deserving student, have decided not to apply for the scholarship. It is my view that despite arguments to the contrary, applying for the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship furthers the racist ideas held by its founder.

Most people would agree that racism in any form is an evil that should be opposed. The Anna Todd Jennings scholarship is a dangerous expression of racism. It explicitly discriminates against African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, and others. By providing a scholarship for whites only, Anna Jennings

* Eds. note — This essay discusses an actual situation, but the name of the scholarship has been changed here.

frustrates the aspirations of groups who until recently had been virtually kept out of the educational mainstream. On this basis alone, students should refuse to apply and should actively work to encourage the school to challenge the racist provisions of Anna Todd Jennings's will. According to one expert, such challenges have been upheld by the courts: the striking down of a similar clause in the will of the eighteenth-century financier Stephen Girard, which limited admission to white male orphans, is just one example.

*Argument
(inductive)*

The school itself must share some blame in this case. 3

Evidence

Students who applied for the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship were unaware of its restrictions. The director of the financial aid office has acknowledged that he knew about the racial restrictions of the scholarship but thought that students should have the right to apply anyway. The materials distributed by the financial aid office also gave no indication that the award was limited to Caucasians. Students were required to fill out forms, submit financial statements, and forward transcripts. In addition to this material, all students were told to attach a recent photograph to their application. Little did the applicants know that the sole purpose of this innocuous little picture was to distinguish whites from nonwhites. By keeping secret the scholarship's restrictions, the school has put students in the position of unwittingly endorsing Anna Jennings's racism. Thus, both the school and the unsuspecting students have been in collusion with the administrators of the Anna Todd Jennings trust.

*Refutation of
opposing argument*

The question students face is this: What is the best way to deal with the generosity of a racist? A recent edition of the school paper contained several letters saying that students should accept Anna Jennings's scholarship money. One student said, "If we do not take that money and use our education to topple the barriers of prejudice, we are giving the money to those who will use the money in the opposite fashion." This argument, although attractive, is flawed. If an individual accepts a scholarship with racial restrictions, then he or she is actually endorsing the principles behind it. If a student does not want to appear to endorse racism, then he or she should reject the scholarship, even if this action causes hardship or gives adversaries a momentary advantage. To do otherwise is to further the cause of the individual who set up the scholarship. The best way to register a 4

protest is to work to change the requirement for the scholarship and to encourage others not to apply as long as the racial restrictions exist.

*Refutation of
opposing argument*

Another letter to this newspaper made the point that a number of other restricted scholarships are available at the school and no one seems to question them. For example, one is for the children of veterans, another is for women, and yet another is earmarked for African Americans. Even though these scholarships have restrictions, to assume that all restrictions are the same is to make a hasty generalization. Women, African Americans, and the children of veterans are groups that many believe deserve special treatment. Both women and African Americans have been discriminated against for years, and, as a result, educational opportunities have been denied them. Earmarking scholarships for them is simply a means of restoring some measure of equality. The children of veterans have been singled out because their parents have performed an extraordinary service for their country. Whites, however, do not fall into either of these categories. Special treatment for them is based solely on race and has nothing to do with any objective standard of need or merit.

Conclusion

*Restatement of
thesis*

*Concluding
statement*

I hope that by refusing to apply for the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship, I have encouraged other students to think about the issues involved in their own decisions. All of us have a responsibility to ourselves and to society. If we truly believe that racism in all its forms is evil, then we have to make a choice between sacrifice and hypocrisy. Faced with these options, our decision should be clear: accept the loss of funds as an opportunity to explore your values and fight for your principles; if you do, this opportunity is worth far more than any scholarship.

Points for Special Attention

Gathering Evidence. Because of his involvement with his subject, Matt Daniels could support his points with examples from his own experience. Still, Matt did have to review the requirements for the scholarship and decide on the arguments he would make. In addition, he reviewed an article that appeared in the school newspaper and the letters students wrote in response to the article. He then chose material that would add authority to his arguments.

Certainly, statistics, studies, and expert testimony, if they exist, would strengthen Matt's argument. But even without such evidence, an argument

such as this one, based on solid reasoning, personal experience, and some research can be quite compelling.

Working with Sources. Matt used material from several outside sources in his editorial. For example, he used information from a government Web site when he discussed Stephen Girard's will. He also used information from an article in his school newspaper as well as from letters to the editor. Matt knew that newspaper editorials like his do not usually include documentation. As he wrote his editorial, however, he used phrases like "According to one expert" to make sure that readers would know when he used information from a source.

Before Matt submitted his editorial for his journalism class, where it would become part of his writing portfolio, he added documentation. Here are two sentences from this version of the editorial, along with the proper documentation.

According to one expert, such challenges have been upheld by the courts: the striking down of a similar case in the will of eighteenth-century financier Stephen Girard is just one example (St. John 12).

One student said, "If we do not take that money and use our education to topple the barriers of prejudice, we are giving the money to those who will use the money in the opposite fashion" (Divakaan).

Refuting Opposing Arguments. Matt devotes two paragraphs to summarizing and refuting arguments made by those who believe qualified students should apply for the scholarship despite its racial restrictions. He begins this section by asking a **rhetorical question** — a question asked not to elicit an answer but to further the argument. He goes on to refute what he considers the two best arguments against his thesis — that students should take the money and work to fight racism and that other scholarships at the school have restrictions. Matt counters these arguments by identifying a flaw in the logic of the first argument and by pointing to a fallacy, a hasty generalization, in the second.

Audience. Because he wrote his essay as an editorial for his college newspaper, Matt assumed his audience would be familiar with the issue he was discussing. Letters to the editor of the paper convinced him that his position was controversial, so he decided that his readers, mostly students and instructors, would have to be persuaded that his points were valid. To achieve this purpose, he carefully presents himself as a reasonable person, explains issues he believes are central to his case, and avoids *ad hominem* attacks. In addition, he avoids sweeping generalizations and name-calling and includes many details to support his assertions and convince readers that his points are worth considering.

Organization. Matt uses several strategies discussed earlier in this chapter. He begins his essay by introducing the issue he is going to discuss

and then states his thesis: “Applying for the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship furthers the racist ideas held by its founder.”

Because Matt had given a good deal of thought to his subject, he was able to construct two fairly strong arguments to support his position. His first argument is deductive. He begins by stating a premise he believes is self-evident — racism should be opposed. The rest of this argument follows a straightforward deductive pattern:

Major premise:	Racism should be opposed.
Minor premise:	The Anna Todd Jennings scholarship is racist.
Conclusion:	Therefore, the Anna Todd Jennings scholarship should be opposed.

Matt ends his first argument with factual evidence that reinforces his conclusion: the successful challenge to the will of financier Stephen Girard, which limited admittance to Girard College in Philadelphia to white male orphans.

Matt’s second argument is inductive, asserting that the school has put students in the position of unknowingly supporting racism. The argument begins with Matt’s hypothesis and presents the fact that even though the school is aware of the racist restrictions of the scholarship, it has not made students aware of them. According to Matt, the school’s knowledge (and tacit approval) of the situation leads to the conclusion that the school is in collusion with those who manage the scholarship.

In his fourth and fifth paragraphs, Matt refutes two opposing arguments. Although his conclusion is rather brief, it does effectively reinforce and support his main idea. Matt ends his essay by recommending a course of action to his fellow students.

Focus on Revision

Matt constructed a solid argument that addressed his central issue very effectively. However, some students on the newspaper’s editorial board thought he should add a section giving more information about Anna Todd Jennings and her bequest. These students believed that such information would help them better understand the implications of accepting her money. As it now stands, the essay dismisses Anna Todd Jennings as a racist, but biographical material and excerpts from her will — both of which appeared in the school paper — would enable readers to grasp the extent of her prejudice. Matt decided to follow up on this advice and to strengthen his conclusion as well. He thought that including the exact words of Anna Todd Jennings would help him to reinforce his points forcefully and memorably.

**PEER EDITING WORKSHEET: Argumentation**

1. Does the essay take a stand on an issue? What is it? At what point does the writer state his or her thesis? Is the thesis debatable?
2. What evidence does the writer include to support his or her position? What additional evidence could the writer supply?
3. Has the writer used information from outside sources? If so, is documentation included? Identify any information that the writer should have documented but did not.
4. Does the essay summarize and refute the opposing arguments? List these arguments.
5. How effective are the writer's refutations? Should the writer address any other arguments?
6. Does the essay use inductive reasoning? Deductive reasoning? Both? Provide an example of each type of reasoning used in the essay.
7. Does the essay include any logical fallacies? How would you correct these fallacies?
8. Do coordinating and subordinating conjunctions convey the logical and sequential connections between ideas?
9. How could the introduction be improved?
10. How could the conclusion be improved?

The essays that follow represent a wide variety of topics, and the purpose of each essay is to support a debatable thesis. In addition to three classic arguments, this chapter also includes two debates and two casebooks that focus on current issues. Each of the debates pairs two essays that take opposing stands on the same issue. In the casebooks, four essays on a single topic offer a greater variety of viewpoints. The first selection, a visual text, is followed by questions designed to illustrate how argumentation can operate in visual form.

Thanks to Modern Science . . . (Ad)

THANKS TO MODERN SCIENCE 17 INNOCENT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM DEATH ROW. THANKS TO MODERN POLITICS 23 INNOCENT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE LIVING.

On April 15, 1999, Ronald Keith Williamson walked away from Oklahoma State Prison a free man. An innocent man. He had spent the last eleven years behind bars. "I did not rape or kill Debra Sue Carter," he would shout day and night from his death row cell. His voice was so torn and raspy from his pleas for justice that he could barely speak. DNA evidence would eventually end his nightmare and prove his innocence. He came within five days of being put to death for a crime he did not commit.

Williamson's plight is not an isolated one. Nor is it even unusual.

Anthony Porter also came within days of being executed. The state of Illinois halted his execution as it questioned whether or not Porter was mentally competent. Porter has an I.Q. of fifty-one. As the state questioned his competence, a journalism class at Northwestern University questioned his guilt. With a small amount of investigating, they managed to produce the real killer. After sixteen years on death row, Anthony Porter would find his freedom. He was lucky. He escaped with his life. A fate not shared by twenty-three other innocent men.

The Chicago Tribune, in its five-part series "Death Row justice derailed," pronounced, "Capital punishment in Illinois is a system so riddled with faulty evidence, unscrupulous trial tactics, and legal incompetence that justice has been forsaken." The governor of Illinois recently declared a moratorium

on the death penalty after the state had acquired the dubious honor of releasing more men from death row than it had executed.

The unfairness that plagues the Illinois system also plagues every other state as well: incompetent lawyers, racial bias, and lack of access to DNA testing all inevitably lead to gross miscarriages of justice. As Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., stated, "Perhaps the bleakest fact of all is that the death penalty is imposed not only in a freakish and discriminatory manner, but also in some cases upon defendants who are actually innocent."

Even those who support capital punishment are finding it increasingly more difficult to endorse it in its current form. Capital punishment is a system that is deeply flawed—a system that preys on the poor and executes the innocent. It is a system that is fundamentally unjust and unfair. Please support our efforts to have a moratorium on further executions declared now. Support the ACLU.



a m e r i c a n c i v i l l i b e r t i e s u n i o n

125 Broad Street, 18th Floor, NY, NY 10004 www.aclu.org

Reading Images

1. What points does the ad's headline make? Does the rest of the ad support these points?
2. How would you describe the picture that accompanies the text? How does the picture reinforce the message of the text?
3. Does this ad appeal primarily to logic, to emotions, or to both? Explain.
4. List the specific points the ad makes. Which points are supported by evidence? Which points should be supported by evidence but are not? How does this lack of support affect your response to the ad?

Journal Entry

Overall, do you find this ad convincing? Write an email to the ACLU presenting your position. Be sure to refer to specific parts of the ad to support your argument.

Thematic Connections

- "Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police" (page 127)
- "Just Walk On By: A Black Man Ponders His Ability to Alter Public Space" (page 240)
- "Get It Right: Privatize Executions" (page 298)
- "A Peaceful Woman Explains Why She Carries a Gun" (page 354)

No Pay? Many Interns Say, “No Problem”

Jennifer Halperin is the internship and special projects coordinator at Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois. She writes a regular column about internships and networking for *Wallet Pop*, an online magazine devoted to consumer finance.

Background on Cooperative Education Programs While unpaid college internships give students opportunities to explore professions, college co-op (from “cooperative education”) programs provide more formal career training. Co-ops are usually paid positions that provide academic credit toward graduation. In some co-op programs, students may have completed their coursework and focus entirely on their training; in other programs, they may alternate between academic work and full-time employment. The University of Cincinnati began the first cooperative learning project in 1906; it was designed to close the divide between the classroom and the workplace while allowing students to earn money in their chosen fields. Northeastern University in Boston began its own cooperative program for engineers in 1909, and many other institutions followed. Current research suggests that students get enormous benefits from such programs, including increased social skills and self-confidence. Over a thousand U.S. colleges now offer co-op programs.

A recent article in the *New York Times* about the growth of unpaid internships has spurred an interesting debate among many people — one that mirrors conversations I have with students almost daily. Several times each week, I receive queries from media outlets and other organizations and businesses seeking interns. Most of these opportunities are unpaid, offering (or sometimes requiring) college credit in exchange for the experience. 1

But a lack of pay doesn’t seem to dissuade students from applying to many of these internships, particularly ones that offer the chance to gain useful professional skills and experience. To my surprise, paid internships don’t always attract the most candidates. Location and intern duties play just as large a role in luring students to apply. And many of these students are juggling classes as well as part- or even full-time jobs — and sometimes even a child of their own — along with the internship. 2

After reading the *Times* piece, I took an informal survey of several recent and about-to-be graduates, some of whom are still looking for jobs, on whether they thought unpaid internships were worthwhile or fair, or should be illegal. I thought many would express frustration over having done work for which they weren’t compensated monetarily. On the con- 3

trary, a common theme among their answers was that while paid internships would be better, unpaid internships were beneficial if they offered real-world, practical experience. The feeling I come away with is that unpaid internships are an important lesson in the concept of *caveat emptor*. As with any job, applicants should try to find out as much [as possible] ahead of time about the duties involved before signing on.

"I would definitely say unpaid internships are worth it," said Brittany Harris, who interned at NBC, CBS, and Kurtis Productions in Chicago as a college student and is now looking for a full-time job as a broadcast journalist. Her work in one internship led to an offer of part-time paid work with the company while she still was in school. "The experience you gain is indescribable," she says. Classes can only teach you so much about how the real world operates, "but nothing beats seeing how it works on a day-to-day basis. It's also a great way to network. I have heard of tons of interns eventually getting hired on to staff after they have completed college."

"Unpaid internships are an important lesson in the concept of *caveat emptor*."

Some do express reservations. Thomas Pardee, who has done both paid and unpaid internships, says he is becoming suspicious of unpaid opportunities, especially those requiring full-time hours.

"They are really only accessible to people who have the financial support from someone else to survive them," he says. He also notes that in many workplaces, the line between what an intern does and what an entry-level employee does is very sketchy. "And many don't offer nearly as much instruction or actual educational attention from supervisors as should be required," he says. "It's not a difficult stretch to assume many companies are unloading the burdens of their smaller paid staffs onto unpaid interns, and not giving them enough in return in terms of guidance or overall perspective in the industry, which is literally supposed to be the entire payoff when you don't get a paycheck."

But just about everyone else I asked found that they did, in fact, receive just that kind of payoff — or certainly saw the potential.

"Unpaid internships are totally worth the hours you put in and the hard work," says Hannah Ferdinand, a production assistant for *The Dr. Oz Show* who did five internships while in college. "Employees of the workplace understand that you are working and learning for free." It shows that you are serious about the career and are willing to put in the hard work needed for the reward of a potential job.

"Any type of experience in your field is good, it builds your résumé and portfolio," says Priya Shah, who will graduate in May and is job-searching across the country. "Unpaid internships are worth it because you are building experience and contacts. And you may land a job after it's over. It's long hours, a lot of work, and then when you go out for lunch, you think 'Wait, how am I paying for this?' But you can learn skills that you wouldn't necessarily learn in a classroom."

Nick Orichuia, who grew up in Italy and came to the United States for graduate school, says: “I think unpaid internships are almost always a valuable experience, especially for students in college. It really is up to the student to make the most of the internship. In most cases, I think employers are interested in pushing interns to the limits to see if they are valid candidates to be hired someday. That is a great learning experience for the intern. If the employer is not interested in developing the intern, then it’s up to the student to push himself or herself to learn as much as he or she can. In my opinion, internships shouldn’t only be seen as opportunities to be hired in the place where one interns, but part of a larger learning experience.”

To its credit, Atlantic Media is pledging to begin paying all interns, and it likely will see a more diverse pool of applicants as a result. Unfortunately, not every employer can afford this kind of commitment.

Nobody respects and values interns’ time more than I do. I am reminded hourly of their hard work, energy, and tenaciousness. Do they deserve compensation? Yes. But the value of internships can’t be calculated in solely financial terms. And unpaid interns go a long way toward breaking the stereotype that today’s youth are emotionally spoiled, demanding of praise and tangible reward at every turn. One’s perception as an industrious worker — even without a paycheck — can be worth its weight in gold.

. . .

Comprehension

1. According to Halperin, what factors make internships attractive to college students and recent graduates? Why is she surprised by the results of her survey?
2. Halperin notices a “common theme” in her discussions with “recent and about-to-be graduates” (3). What attitudes about internships do they seem to share?
3. According to this essay, what can limit access to internships?
4. This essay presents the results of an informal survey of attitudes toward internships. Summarize the advantages and disadvantages of internships that were revealed in the survey.

Purpose and Audience

1. Why do you think Halperin wrote this essay? In what sense is it part of a larger discussion?
2. For the most part, Halperin quotes or summarizes the statements of others. However, she does take a position on the value of internships. How would you express this position?
3. Who is the intended audience for this essay? How can you tell?

4. Halperin is an internship coordinator at a college. How do you think her job might have influenced (or even determined) her point of view on this subject?

Style and Structure

1. Halperin’s evidence consists almost entirely of the results of an informal survey. Do you think this evidence is sufficient? Is all of it relevant?
2. In paragraph 3, Halperin writes the following about those she surveyed: “I thought many would express frustration over having done work for which they weren’t compensated monetarily.” How could you revise this sentence to make it clearer and more concise? What other sentences could you revise? Give specific examples.
3. Is Halperin’s essay structured inductively or deductively? Explain.
4. How would you characterize Halperin’s tone? Is this tone appropriate in light of her overall purpose?
5. How does Halperin use her personal experience and opinions? Why do you think she places this material where she does?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.
spurred (1) tangible (12)
queries (1) industrious (12)
tenaciousness (12)
2. According to Halperin, internships teach an important lesson about the “concept of *caveat emptor*” (3). What does *caveat emptor* mean, and what are its origins? Does the term make sense in the context of this essay? Why or why not?
3. Consider the writer’s use of the word *sketchy* (6). What does the word mean in this context? What synonym would convey the same meaning?

Journal Entry

Have you ever been an intern? Does your experience support Halperin’s conclusions? If you have not had an internship, do you plan to look for one? Why or why not?

Writing Workshop

1. Halperin suggests that some employers assign tasks to interns that blur the boundaries between interns and paid employees; moreover, she believes, employers do not give interns enough of a return, either financially or in terms of guidance. Do you think internships exploit students,

or do you see them as an opportunity for students to gain responsibility and experience? Write an essay in which you take a position on this issue.

2. **Working with Sources.** Both Halperin and Kamenetz (page 583) refer explicitly to negative stereotypes of today's youth and of the Millennial generation. Conduct your own informal survey regarding this stereotype; then, write an essay either supporting or refuting its accuracy. If you refer to Halperin or Kamenetz, be sure to document all material that you borrow, and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
3. **Working with Sources.** Kamenetz uses the term "performative passion," a concept she borrows from a sociologist, to describe the "coping strategies" of interns who overidentify with their employers — and mistakenly confuse "self-sacrifice" with "love" for a job. Is "performative passion" a real problem? Do you think Halperin's essay encourages this attitude? Write an argumentative essay that answers these questions. Be sure to document all material that you borrow from Halperin's essay and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)

Combining the Patterns

Throughout this essay, Halperin uses **exemplification** to clarify, explain, persuade, and create interest. Identify the specific examples used in this essay, and note how each example supports a broader point or generalization. What other kinds of examples could Halperin have used to support her argument?

Thematic Connections

- "Pink Floyd Night School" (page 116)
- "My Mother Never Worked" (page 121)
- "The Shame Game" (page 680)

The Meat Market

Economist Alex Tabarrok (b. 1966) is an associate professor at George Mason University, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1994. He also serves as the Bartley J. Madden Chair in Economics at the Mercatus Center, a research institute at George Mason University focused on market-driven ideas. In addition, he is research director of the Independent Institute, an organization that studies social and economic issues. The author, coauthor, and editor of several books, including *Modern Principles: Microeconomics* (2009), Tabarrok has published widely in the field of economics. Additionally, he blogs at the economics Web site marginalrevolution.com. “The Meat Market” was originally published in the *Wall Street Journal* in 2010.

Background on organ donation and shortages of donor organs Currently, most donor organs come from patients officially pronounced brain dead. Shortages of donors—and the thousands of people who die each year waiting for transplants—have led many in the medical community and the federal government to advocate a more aggressive practice: donation after cardiac death (DCD) rather than after brain death. Some question the ethics of such “organ harvesting,” particularly if done in the high-pressure, fast-paced environment of hospital intensive care units and emergency rooms. The fact remains, however, that more than 100,000 people are now waiting for transplant surgeries. According to official government statistics, this number is rising faster than the number of available donors. The overwhelming majority of these patients need kidneys (86,142), followed by livers (16,022), and hearts (3,149). In the United States, the individual states enact their own donation laws; many allow people to become prospective donors by consenting on their driver’s licenses. According to Donate Life America, as of 2010, 86.3 million Americans were enrolled in these state donor registries.

Harvesting human organs for sale! The idea suggests the lurid world 1
of horror movies and nineteenth-century graverobbers. Yet right now, Singapore is preparing to pay donors as much as 50,000 Singapore dollars (almost US\$36,000) for their organs. Iran has eliminated waiting lists for kidneys entirely by paying its citizens to donate. Israel is implementing a “no give, no take” system that puts people who opt out of the donor system at the bottom of the transplant waiting list should they ever need an organ.

Millions of people suffer from kidney disease, but in 2007 there were 2
just 64,606 kidney-transplant operations in the entire world. In the U.S. alone, 83,000 people wait on the official kidney-transplant list. But just 16,500 people received a kidney transplant in 2008, while almost 5,000 died waiting for one.

To combat yet another shortfall, some American doctors are routinely removing pieces of tissue from deceased patients for transplant without their, or their families', prior consent. And the practice is perfectly legal. In a number of U.S. states, medical examiners conducting autopsies may and do harvest corneas with little or no family notification. (By the time of autopsy, it is too late to harvest organs such as kidneys.) Few people know about routine removal statutes and perhaps because of this, these laws have effectively increased cornea transplants.

Routine removal is perhaps the most extreme response to the devastating shortage of organs worldwide. That shortage is leading some countries to try unusual new methods to increase donation. Innovation has occurred in the U.S. as well, but progress has been slow and not without cost or controversy.

Organs can be taken from deceased donors only after they have been declared dead, but where is the line between life and death? Philosophers have been debating the dividing line between baldness and nonbaldness for over 2,000 years, so there is little hope that the dividing line between life and death will ever be agreed upon. Indeed, the great paradox of deceased donation is that we must draw the line between life and death precisely where we cannot be sure of the answer, because the line must lie where the donor is dead but the donor's organs are not.

In 1968 the *Journal of the American Medical Association* published its criteria for brain death. But reduced crime and better automobile safety have led to fewer potential brain-dead donors than in the past. Now, greater attention is being given to donation after cardiac death: no heartbeat for two to five minutes (protocols differ) after the heart stops beating spontaneously. Both standards are controversial — the surgeon who performed the first heart transplant from a brain-dead donor in 1968 was threatened with prosecution, as have been some surgeons using donation after cardiac death. Despite the controversy, donation after cardiac death more than tripled between 2002 and 2006, when it accounted for about 8 percent of all deceased donors nationwide. In some regions, that figure is up to 20 percent.

The shortage of organs has increased the use of so-called expanded-criteria organs, or organs that used to be considered unsuitable for transplant. Kidneys donated from people over the age of 60 or from people who had various medical problems are more likely to fail than organs from younger, healthier donors, but they are now being used under the pressure. At the University of Maryland's School of Medicine five patients recently received transplants of kidneys that had either cancerous or benign tumors removed from them. Why would anyone risk cancer? Head surgeon Dr. Michael Phelan explained, "the ongoing shortage of organs from deceased donors, and the high risk of dying while waiting for a transplant, prompted five donors and recipients to push ahead with surgery." Expanded-criteria organs are a useful response to the shortage, but their use also means that the shortage is even worse than it appears because as the waiting list lengthens, the quality of transplants is falling.

Routine removal has been used for corneas but is unlikely to ever become standard for kidneys, livers, or lungs. Nevertheless more countries are moving toward presumed consent. Under that standard, everyone is considered to be a potential organ donor unless they have affirmatively opted out, say, by signing a non-organ-donor card. Presumed consent is common in Europe and appears to raise donation rates modestly, especially when combined, as it is in Spain, with readily available transplant coordinators, trained organ-procurement specialists, round-the-clock laboratory facilities, and other investments in transplant infrastructure.

The British Medical Association has called for a presumed consent system in the U.K., and Wales plans to move to such a system this year. India is also beginning a presumed consent program that will start this year with corneas and later expand to other organs. Presumed consent has less support in the U.S. but experiments at the state level would make for a useful test.

Rabbis selling organs in New Jersey? Organ sales from poor Indian, Thai, and Philippine donors? Transplant tourism? It's all part of the growing black market in transplants. Already, the black market may account for 5 percent to 10 percent of transplants worldwide. If organ sales are voluntary, it's hard to fault either the buyer or the seller. But as long as the market remains underground the donors may not receive adequate post-operative care, and that puts a black mark on all proposals to legalize financial compensation.

Only one country, Iran, has eliminated the shortage of transplant organs — and only Iran has a working and legal payment system for organ donation. In this system, organs are not bought and sold at the bazaar. Patients who cannot be assigned a kidney from a deceased donor and who cannot find a related living donor may apply to the nonprofit, volunteer-run Dialysis and Transplant Patients Association (Datpa). Datpa identifies potential donors from a pool of applicants. Those donors are medically evaluated by transplant physicians, who have no connection to Datpa, in just the same way as are uncompensated donors. The government pays donors \$1,200 and provides one year of limited health-insurance coverage. In addition, working through Datpa, kidney recipients pay donors between \$2,300 and \$4,500. Charitable organizations provide remuneration to donors for recipients who cannot afford to pay, thus demonstrating that Iran has something to teach the world about charity as well as about markets.

The Iranian system and the black market demonstrate one important fact: The organ shortage can be solved by paying living donors. The Iranian system began in 1988 and eliminated the shortage of kidneys by 1999. Writing in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* in 2007, Nobel Laureate economist Gary Becker and Julio Elias estimated that a payment of \$15,000 for living donors would alleviate the shortage of kidneys in the U.S. Payment could be made by the federal government to avoid any hint of inequality in kidney allocation. Moreover, this proposal would save the government money since even with a significant payment, transplant is cheaper than

the dialysis that is now paid for by Medicare's End Stage Renal Disease program.

In March 2009 Singapore legalized a government plan for paying organ donors. Although it's not clear yet when this will be implemented, the amounts being discussed for payment, around \$50,000, suggest the possibility of a significant donor incentive. So far, the U.S. has lagged other countries in addressing the shortage, but last year, Sen. Arlen Specter circulated a draft bill that would allow U.S. government entities to test compensation programs for organ donation. These programs would only offer noncash compensation such as funeral expenses for deceased donors and health and life insurance or tax credits for living donors.

Worldwide we will soon harvest more kidneys from living donors than from deceased donors. In one sense, this is a great success — the body can function perfectly well with one kidney, so with proper care, kidney donation is a low-risk procedure. In another sense, it's an ugly failure. Why must we harvest kidneys from the living, when kidneys that could save lives are routinely being buried and burned? A payment of funeral expenses for the gift of life or a discount on driver's license fees for those who sign their organ donor card could increase the supply of organs from deceased donors, saving lives and also alleviating some of the necessity for living donors.

“Why must we harvest kidneys from the living, when kidneys that could save lives are routinely being buried and burned?”

Two countries, Singapore and Israel, have pioneered nonmonetary incentives systems for potential organ donors. In Singapore anyone may opt out of its presumed consent system. However, those who opt out are assigned a lower priority on the transplant waiting list should they one day need an organ, a system I have called “no give, no take.”

Many people find the idea of paying for organs repugnant but they do accept the ethical foundation of no give, no take — that those who are willing to give should be the first to receive. In addition to satisfying ethical constraints, no give, no take increases the incentive to sign one's organ donor card, thereby reducing the shortage. In the U.S., Lifesharers.org, a nonprofit network of potential organ donors (for which I am an adviser), is working to implement a similar system.

In Israel a more flexible version of no give, no take will be phased into place beginning this year. In the Israeli system, people who sign their organ donor cards are given points pushing them up the transplant list should they one day need a transplant. Points will also be given to transplant candidates whose first-degree relatives have signed their organ donor cards or whose first-degree relatives were organ donors. In the case of kidneys, for example, two points (on a 0- to 18-point scale) will be given if the candidate had three or more years previous to being listed signed their organ card. One point will be given if a first-degree relative has signed and 3.5 points if a first-degree relative has previously donated an organ.

The worldwide shortage of organs is going to get worse before it gets better, but we do have options. Presumed consent, financial compensation for living and deceased donors, and point systems would all increase the supply of transplant organs. Too many people have died already but pressure is mounting for innovation that will save lives.

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Comprehension

1. What, according to Tabarrok, is “the great paradox of deceased donation” (5)? Why is this paradox significant?
2. What positive developments in the last several decades have “led to fewer potential brain-dead donors than in the past” (6)?
3. Tabarrok uses definition in paragraph 7. What does he define, and how does this definition help him achieve his essay’s purpose?
4. Tabarrok identifies one country that has eliminated shortages in transplant organs. Which country? How has this been accomplished?

Purpose and Audience

1. What is your reaction to Tabarrok’s title? To his essay’s opening sentence? Do you think these are the reactions he expected readers to have? Explain.
2. Tabarrok’s introduction relies on certain assumptions regarding his readers’ attitudes about organ harvesting. What are these assumptions? Do you find this introduction effective? Why or why not?
3. According to Tabarrok, presumed consent “has less support in the U.S.” (9) than in other countries. What does he think might change that? Does he support “presumed consent”?
4. In paragraph 5, Tabarrok raises one of the most profound questions influencing the debate about organ donations: what is the dividing line between life and death? However, he avoids further discussion of this issue in his essay. Why? Would his essay have been stronger if he had elaborated on the subject? Why or why not?

Style and Structure

1. Tabarrok is an economist. Do you think he approaches the subject differently from the way a member of the clergy, a lawyer, or a physician would? What advantages does his perspective give him?
2. Tabarrok uses cause and effect several times in the essay. Identify two examples. How effective are they? How do they support his overall purpose?
3. In paragraph 12, Tabarrok uses inductive reasoning. Does his inference seem justified? Why or why not?

4. Tabarrok repeatedly writes in the passive voice — for example, in paragraphs 4 and 8. Would rewriting such sentences in the active voice make the sentences — and the writer’s argument — stronger? Why or why not?
5. Evaluate Tabarrok’s title. Given his purpose, audience, and subject matter, do you think it is appropriate? Explain.

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

lurid (1)	protocols (6)
corneas (3)	alleviate (12)
paradox (5)	priority (15)
criteria (6)	repugnant (16)
2. In paragraph 10, Tabarrok refers to the “growing black market in transplants.” What is a black market? What connotations does the term have? How does Tabarrok view this market for organs?

Journal Entry

Tabarrok writes, “Many people find the idea of paying for organs repugnant but they do accept the ethical foundation of no give, no take. . . .” (16). Do these generalizations apply to you? Explain.

Writing Workshop

1. According to Tabarrok, “some American doctors are routinely removing pieces of tissue from deceased patients for transplant without their, or their families’, prior consent” (3). Do you think doctors should be allowed to do this? How would you react if such a procedure were performed on a member of your own family? Write an essay explaining your position.
2. **Working with Sources.** Tabarrok claims that the United States lags behind the rest of the world in addressing the transplant issue. In fact, he spends much of his essay describing the transplant policies of countries like Iran and Israel. Choose another significant issue or policy (for example, birthright citizenship, government-supported health care, or firearms laws) on which America differs from other countries. Research the issue, and then write an essay arguing either that the United States should change its policy or approach or that it should keep its current policy rather than emulating the policies of the other countries you discuss. Be sure to document all material you borrow from your sources, and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
3. **Working with Sources.** In paragraph 10, Tabarrok writes, “Rabbis selling organs in New Jersey? Organ sales from poor Indian, Thai, and Philippine donors? Transplant tourism?” Choose one of these three examples to research. Then, write an essay that explains the significance of the example

in the larger context of the organ-donation debate. Be sure to document all material you borrow from your sources, and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)

Combining the Patterns

How does Tabarrok use **exemplification** in this essay? Does he give examples to clarify, explain, add interest, or persuade? How do his examples support the points he wants to get across?

Thematic Connections

- “Get It Right: Privatize Executions” (page 298)
- “The Embalming of Mr. Jones” (page 303)
- “Why Vampires Never Die” (page 361)

DANIEL ENGBER

Let Them Drink Water!

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Background on soft-drink machines in schools A typical 20-ounce bottle of a sugared soft drink from a vending machine contains 250 calories. Not surprisingly, government policymakers and others have targeted such machines in their efforts to reduce obesity rates — particularly among children. The state of California has banned these products outright from all public schools. Nationally, the 2010 Child Nutrition Act includes restrictions for school vending machines across the country. Still, some people are concerned about the financial consequences of such legislation: schools often use funds from soft-drink sales to support athletics, field trips, and other activities. Further complicating the issue, such restrictions — and even outright bans — sometimes extend outside public schools. (In San Francisco, for example, Mayor Gavin Newsom banned high-calorie sweetened beverages from all city property.)

Not long after the attack on Pearl Harbor, in the winter of 1942, 1 physiologist A.J. Carlson made a radical suggestion: If the nation's largest citizens were charged a fee — say, \$20 for each pound of overweight — we might feed the war effort overseas while working to subdue an “injurious luxury” at home.

Sixty-seven years later, the “fat tax” is back on the table. We're fighting 2 another war — our second-most-expensive ever — and Congress seems on the verge of spending \$1 trillion on health care. Once again, a bloated budget may fall on the backs of the bloated public. Some commentators, following Carlson, have lately called for a tax on fat people themselves (cf. the Huffington Post and the *New York Times*); others, like a team of academics writing in the current issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, propose a hefty surcharge on soft drinks instead.

The notion hasn't generated much enthusiasm in Congress, but fat 3 taxes are spreading through state legislatures: Four-fifths of the union now takes a cut on the sales of junk food or soda. Pleas for a federal fat tax are getting louder, too. The *New York Times* recently endorsed a penny-per-ounce soda tax, and Michael Pollan* has made a convincing argument for why the insurance industry may soon throw its weight behind the proposal. Even President Obama said he likes the idea in a recent interview

* Eds. note — American author, journalist, and professor who writes frequently about food and agriculture (b. 1955).

with *Men's Health*. (For the record, Stephen Colbert* is against the measure: "I do not obey big government; I obey my thirst.")

For all this, the public still has strong reservations about the fat tax. 4 The state-level penalties now in place have turned out to be way too small to make anyone lose weight, and efforts to pass more heavy-handed laws have so far fallen short. But proponents say it's only a matter of time before taxing junk food feels as natural as taxing cigarettes. The latter has been a tremendous success, they argue, in bringing down rates of smoking and death from lung cancer. In theory, a steep tax on sweetened beverages could do the same for overeating and diabetes.

It may take more than an analogy with tobacco to convince voters. As 5 my colleague William Saletan points out, the first step in policing eating habits is to redefine food as something else. If you want to tax the hell out of soda, you need to make people think that it's a drug, not a beverage — that downing a Coke is just like puffing on a cigarette. But is soda as bad as tobacco? Let's ask the neuro pundits.

Junk food literally "alters the biological circuitry of our brains," writes 6 David Kessler in this summer's best-seller, *The End of Overeating*. In a previous book, Kessler detailed his role in prosecuting the war on smoking as the head of the FDA; now he's explaining what makes us fat with all the magisterial jargon of cognitive neuroscience. Eating a chocolate-covered pretzel, he says, activates the brain's pleasure system — the dopamine reward circuit, to be exact — and changes the "functional connectivity among important brain regions." Thus, certain foods — the ones concocted by industrial scientists and laden with salt, sugar, and fat — can circumvent our natural inclinations and trigger "action schemata" for mindless eating. Got that? Junk food is engineered to enslave us. Kessler even has a catchphrase to describe these nefarious snacks: They're hyperpalatable.

Try as we might, we're nearly powerless to resist these treats. That's 7 because evolution has us programmed to experience two forms of hunger. The first kicks in when we're low on energy. As an adaptation, its purpose is simple enough — we eat to stay alive. The second, called hedonic hunger, applies even when we're full — it's the urge to eat for pleasure. When food is scarce, hedonic hunger comes in handy, so we can stock up on calories for the hard times ahead. But in a world of cheap food, the same impulse makes us fat.

That's the problem with junk food. Manufacturers have figured out 8 how to prey on man's voluptuous nature. Like the cigarette companies, they lace their products with addictive chemicals and cajole us into wanting things we don't really need. Soda is like a designer drug, layered with seductive elements — sweetness for a burst of dopamine, bubbles to prick the trigeminal nerve.

* Eds. note — American television host, satirist, writer, and comedian (b. 1964).

It's hard to draw a line, though, between foods that are drugs and foods that are merely delicious. Soda and candy aren't the only stimuli that "rewire your brain," of course. Coffee does, too, and so do video games, Twitter, meditation, and just about anything else that might give you pleasure (or pain). That's what brains do — they learn, they rewire. To construe an earthly delight as hyperpalatable — as too good for our own good — we're lashing out at sensuality itself. "Do you design food specifically to be highly hedonic?" Kessler asks an industry consultant at one point in the book. What's the guy going to say? "No, we design food to be bland and nutritious. . . ."

It's ironic that so many advocates for healthy eating are also outspoken gourmands. Alice Waters, the proprietor of Chez Panisse, calls for a "delicious revolution" of low-fat, low-sugar lunch programs. It's a central dogma of the organic movement that you can be a foodie and a health nut at the same time — that what's real and natural tastes better, anyway. Never mind how much fat and sugar and salt you'll get from a Wabash Cannonball* and a slice of *pain au levain*. Forget that *cuisiniers* have for centuries been catering to our hedonic hunger — our pleasure-seeking, caveman selves — with a repertoire of batters and sauces. Junk foods are *hyperpalatable*. Whole Foods is *delicious*. Doughnuts are a drug; brioche is a treat.

Some tastes, it seems, are more equal than others. 11

A fat tax, then, discriminates among the varieties of gustatory experience. And its impact would fall most directly on the poor, nonwhite people who tend to be the most avid consumers of soft drinks and the most sensitive to price. Under an apartheid of pleasure, palatable drinks are penalized while delicious — or even hyperdelicious — products come at no extra charge. What about the folks who can't afford a \$5 bottle of POM Wonderful?

No big deal, say the academics writing in the *New England Journal of Medicine*; they can always drink from the faucet. Here's how the article puts it: "Sugar-sweetened beverages are not necessary for survival, and an alternative (i.e., water) is available at little or no cost." So much for *Let them eat cake*.

We've known for a long time that any sin tax is likely to be a burden on the poor, since they're most prone to unhealthy behavior. (James Madison fought the snuff tax on these grounds way back in 1794.) But you might just as well say that poor people have the most to gain from a sin tax for exactly the same reason. It's also possible that revenues from a fat tax would be spent on obesity prevention — or go back to the community in other ways. There's a knotty argument here about the vexing and reciprocal interactions among health, wealth, and obesity. It's not clear whether, and in what direction, a soda tax might redistribute wealth. Whatever you

* Eds. note — An artisanal goat cheese made in Indiana.

think of the economics, though, raising the price on soda — and offering water in its places — will redistribute pleasure.

I don't mean to imply that any such regulation is unjust. We have laws against plenty of chemicals and behaviors that are as delightful as they are destructive. These are, for the most part, sensible measures to protect our health. What's disturbing is the thought that the degree of government control should vary according to who's using which drug.

“What's disturbing is the thought that the degree of government control should vary according to who's using which drug.”

15

In April, the Obama administration called for an end to a long-standing policy that gives dealers of powdered cocaine 100 times more leeway than dealers of crack when it comes to federal prison sentences. Let's not repeat this drug-war injustice in the war on obesity. We may be ready to say that foods are addictive. Are we ready to judge the nature of a delicious high?

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Comprehension

1. According to Engber, what is the public's attitude toward taxing junk food and soda? How does he support this generalization?
2. Policymakers and public health experts who support taxing junk food draw an analogy between junk food and cigarettes. According to Engber, what redefinition does the analogy require?
3. What does Engber find “ironic” about “so many advocates for healthy eating” (10)?
4. In paragraph 10, Engber discusses the organic food movement. How does he define its “central dogma”?
5. Engber argues that a fat tax “discriminates among the varieties of gustatory experience” (12). What does he mean? Which specific groups does he believe such a tax would affect disproportionately?

Purpose and Audience

1. What is Engber's purpose? Is he writing to change his readers' minds, to propose a course of action, to influence public policy, to inform his readers — or to provoke them? Explain.
2. Where does Engber think his audience stands on the issues he discusses? Does he see them as knowledgeable or uninformed? Does he think they are more likely to eat junk food or *pain au levain*? How can you tell?
3. In paragraph 14, Engber notes a lack of clarity about the effects of “sin taxes” on behavior. How does this lack of clarity strengthen his argument?

Style and Structure

1. What is the purpose of paragraphs 2 and 3? Why are they important to Engber's argument?
2. In paragraph 6, Engber quotes and paraphrases from David Kessler's *The End of Overeating*. Why does he do this? What is Engber's attitude toward Kessler's book — and toward the practice of applying neuroscience to overeating and junk food?
3. Where does Engber use cause-and-effect arguments? How do these arguments support his position?
4. Engber ends his essay with a surprising analogy. What two things is he comparing? Is this comparison logical? What point does it make?

Vocabulary Projects

1. Define each of the following words as it is used in this selection.

radical (1)	laden (6)	trigeminal (8)
bloated (2)	circumvent (6)	construe (9)
surcharge (2)	nefarious (6)	gourmands (10)
neuropundits (5)	hedonic (7)	dogma (10)
magisterial (6)	voluptuous (8)	brioche (10)
jargon (6)	cajole (8)	gustatory (12)
concocted (6)		
2. Engber ends paragraph 10 with a series of contrasting words. What are these words? What point is he trying to make here about language as it is used in the junk-food tax debate? Is it successful in making this point?
3. In paragraph 12, Engber writes that a fat tax would lead to an “apartheid of pleasure.” What does the word *apartheid* mean? What connotations does it have? Is it an appropriate word in this context?

Journal Entry

According to Engber, organic food advocates argue that real, natural, healthy food “tastes better, anyway” (10). Do you agree that natural food tastes better than junk food?

Writing Workshop

1. **Working with Sources.** Engber writes about the “organic movement” in paragraph 10. Research the organic food movement, and then write an essay taking a stand on its benefits and drawbacks. Be sure to document all material that you borrow from your sources, and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)

2. **Working with Sources.** Do you support taxing junk food and soda for the purposes of improving public health? Using the selections in this case-book as your sources, write an argumentative essay that takes a position on this issue. Be sure to document all material that you borrow from your sources, and include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
3. According to Engber, “We’ve known for a long time that any sin tax is likely to be a burden on the poor, since they’re most prone to unhealthy behavior” (14). Do you agree? Write an essay arguing that such taxes are (or are not) unfair.

Combining the Patterns

How is **definition** important to Engber’s argument and overall purpose? Point to specific examples of definition in the essay. Should Engber have included additional definitions?

Thematic Connections

- “No Wonder They Call Me a Bitch” (page 176)
- “Why Looks Are the Last Bastion of Discrimination” (page 246)
- “Tortillas” (page 507)

Writing Assignments for Argumentation

1. Write an argumentative essay discussing whether parents have a right to spank their children. If your position is that they do, under what circumstances? What limitations should exist? If your position is that they do not, how should parents discipline children? How should they deal with inappropriate behavior?
2. Go to the American Library Association's Web site at www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengedclassics/reasons banned/index.cfm, and look at the list of the most frequently banned books of the twentieth century. Choose a book from the list that you have read. Assume that a library in your town has decided that the book you have chosen is objectionable and has removed it from the shelves. Write an email to your local newspaper arguing for or against the library's actions. Make a list of the major arguments that might be advanced against your position, and try to refute some of them in your email.
3. In Great Britain, cities began installing video surveillance systems in public areas in the 1970s. Police departments claim that these cameras help them do their jobs more efficiently. For example, such cameras enabled police to identify and capture terrorists who bombed the London subway in 2005. Opponents of the cameras say that the police are creating a society that severely compromises the right of personal privacy. How do you feel about this issue? Assume that the police department in your city is proposing to install cameras in the downtown and other pedestrian areas. Write an editorial for your local paper presenting your views on the topic.
4. Write an essay discussing under what circumstances, if any, animals should be used for scientific experimentation.
5. **Working with Sources.** Each year, a growing number of high school graduates are choosing to take a year off before going to college. The idea of this kind of "gap year" has been the source of some debate. Proponents say that a gap year gives students time to mature, time to decide what they want to get out of their education. It also gives them the opportunity to travel or to save some money for college. Detractors of a gap year point out that some students have trouble getting back into the academic routine when the year is over. In addition, students who take a year off are a year behind their classmates when they return. Research the pros and cons of the gap year. Then, write an essay in which you argue for or against taking a year off before college. Be sure to document your sources and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information on MLA documentation.)
6. **Working with Sources.** Go to the Web site deathpenalty.org, and research some criminal cases that resulted in the death penalty. Write an essay using these accounts to support your arguments either for or

against the death penalty. Be sure to document your sources and to include a works-cited page. (See Chapter 18 for information about MLA documentation.)

7. Write an argumentative essay discussing under what circumstances a nation has an obligation to go (or not to go) to war.
8. Since the events of September 11, 2001, the idea of arming pilots of commercial passenger planes has been debated. Those opposed to arming pilots claim that the risks — that a gun will fall into the hands of hijackers or that a passenger will be accidentally shot — outweigh any benefits. Those who support the idea say that the pilot is the last line of defense and must be able to defend the cockpit from terrorists. Due to public pressure in favor of arming pilots, a small trial program has been instituted. Do you think all pilots of commercial airplanes should be armed? Write an argumentative essay presenting your views on this subject.
9. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson says that all individuals are entitled to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Write an essay arguing that these rights are not absolute.
10. Write an argumentative essay on one of these topics:
 - Should high school students be required to recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of each school day?
 - Should college students be required to do community service?
 - Should public school teachers be required to pass periodic competency tests?
 - Should the legal drinking age be raised (or lowered)?
 - Should states be required to educate the children of illegal immigrants?
 - Should sugary drinks be banned in all public schools and government workplaces?
 - Do Facebook and other social networking sites do more harm than good?
 - Should undocumented immigrants be given amnesty?

Collaborative Activity for Argumentation

Working with three other students, select a controversial topic — one not covered in any of the debates in this chapter — that interests all of you. (You can review the Writing Assignments for Argumentation to get ideas.) State your position the way a topic is stated in a formal debate:

Resolved: The United States should censor Internet content.

Then, divide into two-member teams, and decide which team will take the pro position and which will take the con. Each team should list the

arguments on its side of the issue and then write two or three paragraphs summarizing its position. Finally, the teams should stage a ten-minute debate — five minutes for each side — in front of the class. (The pro side presents its argument first.) At the end of each debate, the class should decide which team has presented the stronger arguments.

PART THREE

Working with Sources

Some students see research as a complicated, time-consuming process that seems to have no obvious benefit. They can't understand why instructors assign topics that involve research or why they have to spend so much time considering other people's ideas. These are fair questions that deserve straightforward answers.

For one thing, doing research enables you to become part of an academic community — one that attempts to answer some of the most interesting and profound questions being asked today. For example, what steps should be taken to ensure privacy on the Internet? What is the value of a college education? What is the role of print journalism in the electronic age? How much should the government be involved in people's lives? These and other questions need to be addressed not just because they are interesting but also because the future of our society depends on the answers.

In addition, research teaches sound methods of inquiry. By doing research, you learn to ask questions, to design a research plan, to meet deadlines, to collect and analyze information, and to present ideas in a well-organized essay. Above all, research encourages you to **think critically** — to consider different sources of information, to evaluate conflicting points of view, to understand how the information you discover fits in with your own ideas about your subject, and to reach logical conclusions. Thus, doing research helps you become a more thoughtful writer as well as a more responsible, more informed citizen — one who is capable of sorting through the vast amount of information you encounter each day and of making informed decisions about the important issues that confront us all.

When you use sources in a paper, you follow the same writing process as you do when you write any essay. However, in addition to using your own ideas to support your points, you use information that you find in the library and on the Internet. Because working with sources presents special challenges, there are certain issues that you should be aware of before you engage in research. The chapters in Part Three identify these issues and give

you practical suggestions for dealing with them. Chapter 16 discusses how to find sources and how to determine if those sources are authoritative, accurate, objective, current, and comprehensive. Chapter 17 discusses how to paraphrase, summarize, and quote sources and how to avoid committing plagiarism. Finally, Chapter 18 explains how to use the documentation style recommended by the Modern Language Association (MLA) to acknowledge the source information you use in your papers. (The documentation style recommended by the American Psychological Association [APA] is illustrated in the Appendix.)

Finding and Evaluating Sources

In some essays you write — personal narratives or descriptions, for example — you can use your own ideas and observations to support the points you make. In other essays, however, you will have to supplement your own ideas with **research**, looking for information in magazines, newspapers, journals, and books as well as in the library's electronic databases or on the Internet.

Finding Information in the Library

Although many students turn first to the Internet, the best place to begin your research is in your college library, which contains electronic and print resources that you cannot find anywhere else. Of course, your college library houses books, magazines, and journals, but it also gives you access to the various **databases** to which it subscribes as well as to reference works that contain facts and statistics.

THE RESOURCES OF THE LIBRARY

The Online Catalog

An **online catalog** enables you to search all the resources held by the library. You can access the online catalog from computer terminals in the library or remotely through an Internet portal. By typing in keywords related to your topic, you can find articles, books, or other sources of information to use in your research.

Electronic Databases

Libraries subscribe to **electronic databases** — for example, *Expanded Academic ASAP* or *LexisNexis Academic Universe*. These electronic databases enable you to

access information from hundreds of newspapers, magazines, and journals. Some contain lists of bibliographic citations as well as **abstracts** (summaries of articles); many others enable you to retrieve entire articles or books.

Reference Works

Libraries also contain reference works — in print and in electronic form — that can give you an overview of your topic as well as key facts, dates, and names. **General encyclopedias** — such as the *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* — include articles on a wide variety of topics. **Specialized encyclopedias** — such as the *Encyclopedia of Law Enforcement* — contain articles that give you detailed information about a specific field (sociology or law enforcement, for example).

Sources for Facts and Statistics

Reference works such as *Facts on File*, the *Information Please Almanac*, and the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* can help you locate facts or statistics that you may need to support your points. (These resources are available online as well as in the reference section of your college library.)

Much of the information in library databases — for example, the full text of many scholarly articles — cannot be found on the Internet. In addition, because your college librarians oversee all material coming into the library, the sources you find there are generally more reliable, more focused, and more useful than many you will find on the Internet.

INTERNET

- Coverage is general, haphazard
- Sources may not contain bibliographic information
- Web postings are not filtered
- Material is posted by anyone, regardless of qualifications

LIBRARY DATABASES

- Coverage is focused and often discipline-specific
- Sources will contain bibliographic information
- Databases are created by librarians and scholars
- Material is checked for accuracy and quality

Exercise 1

Assume that you are writing a three- to five-page paper on one of the general topics listed below.

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Eating disorders | Women in combat |
| Alternative medicine | Green construction projects |
| Government health care | Legalizing marijuana |
| Offshore drilling | Electric cars |
| Recycling | Stem-cell research |

Using your college library's online catalog, see how much information you can find. How easy was this system to use? Where did you have difficulty?

Finding Information on the Internet

The **Internet** gives you access to a great deal of information that you can use to support your points and to develop your essay. When most people refer to the Internet, they are actually referring to the **Web**, which is part of the Internet. Once you connect to the Web with your browser, you use a search engine such as Google or Yahoo! to sort through the millions of documents that are available there. There are three ways to access information on the Web: *entering a Web site's URL*, *doing a keyword search*, and *doing a subject search*.

Entering a Web site's URL. All browsers have a box in which you can enter a Web site's **uniform resource locator (URL)**. When you hit the computer's Enter or Return key, the browser will connect you to the Web site.

Doing a keyword search. All search engines enable you to do a **keyword search**. You type a search term into a box, and the search engine looks for documents that contain the term. If you type in a broad term like *civil war*, you will get millions of hits — many more than you could possibly consider. If you narrow your search by using a more specific search term — *Battle of Gettysburg*, for example — you will get fewer hits. You can focus your search even further by connecting search terms with *and* (in capital letters) — for example, *Battle of Gettysburg AND military strategy*. The documents you retrieve will contain both these search terms, not just one or the other. You can also put quotation marks around a search term — for example, "Lee's surrender at Appomattox." If you do this, the search engine will retrieve only documents that contain this specific phrase.

Doing a subject search. Some search engines, such as Google, enable you to do a **subject search** (also called a *directory search*). First, you choose a subject from a list of general subjects: *The Arts*, *Business*, *Computers*, *Science*, and so on. Each of these general subjects leads you to more specific subjects and, eventually, to the subtopic that you want. For example, you could start your search by selecting the general topic *Science*. Clicking on this topic would lead you to *Environment* and then to *Forests and Rainforests*. Finally, you would get a list of Web sites that could be useful to you.

ACCESSING WEB SITES: TROUBLESHOOTING

Sometimes you will be unable to connect to the site you want. Before giving up, try these strategies:

- **Check to make sure that the URL is correct.** Any error in typing the URL — an extra space or an added letter — will send you to the wrong site or to no site at all.
- **Try using part of the URL.** If the URL is long, try deleting everything after the last slash. If this doesn't work, use just the part of the URL that ends in .com or .gov. If this part of the URL doesn't work, you have an incorrect (or inoperable) URL.
- **Try revisiting the site later.** Sometimes Web sites experience technical problems that prevent you from accessing them. Wait a while, and then try accessing your site again.

Exercise 2

Carry out an Internet search of the topic you chose for Exercise 1. How much useful information were you able to find? How does this information compare to the information you found when you used the library's online catalog?

Evaluating Sources

Not every source contains trustworthy information. For this reason, even after you find information (either in print or online), you still have to **evaluate** it — that is, determine its suitability. When you use print information from your college library, you can be reasonably certain that it has been evaluated in some way. Material from the Web presents special problems, however, because so much of it is either anonymous or written by people who have little or no knowledge of their subject.

To evaluate a source, ask the following questions.

Is the source authoritative? A source is *authoritative* when it is written by an expert. Given the volume and variety of information on the Web, it is important to determine if it is written by a well-respected scholar or expert in the field. (This is especially true for Wiki sites where information is constantly being rewritten or revised — often by people with little or no expertise in a field.) To determine if the author has the expertise to write about a subject, find out what else he or she has written on the same subject, and then do a Web search to see if other authorities recognize the author as an expert.

Trying to determine the legitimacy of information on Web sites, online presses, and blogs can often be difficult or even impossible. Some sites do not list authors, and if they do, they do not always include their credentials. In addition, you may not be able to determine how a Web site decides what

to publish. (Does one person decide, or does an editorial board make decisions?) Finally, you might have difficulty evaluating (or even identifying) the sponsoring organization of a site. If you cannot determine the accuracy of material on a Web site, do not use the site as a source.

Is the source accurate? A source is **accurate** if you can rely on the information it contains. If a university press or scholarly journal published a book or article, you can be reasonably certain that experts in the field reviewed it to confirm its accuracy. Books published by commercial presses or articles in high-level magazines, such as the *Atlantic* and the *Economist*, may also be suitable for your research — provided experts wrote them. The same is true for newspaper articles. Articles in respected newspapers, such as the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*, have much more credibility than articles in tabloids, such as the *National Enquirer* or the *Globe*.

You can judge the accuracy of a source by comparing specific information it contains to the same information in several other sources. If you find discrepancies, you should assume that the source contains other errors as well. You should also check to see if an author includes citations for the information he or she uses. Such documentation can help readers determine the accuracy (and the quality) of the information in the source. Also, verify the legitimacy of the sources a writer cites by seeing what you can find out about them on the Web. Perhaps the best (and safest) course to follow is that if you can't verify the information you find on a Web site, don't use it.

Is the source objective? A source is **objective** when it is not unduly influenced by personal opinions or feelings. Of course, all sources reflect the opinions of their authors, regardless of how impartial they may try to be. Some sources — such as those that support one political position over another — make no secret of their biases. In fact, bias does not automatically disqualify a source. It should, however, alert you to the fact that you are seeing just one side of an issue and that you have to look elsewhere to get a fuller picture.

As a researcher, you should ask yourself if a writer's conclusions are supported by evidence or if they are the result of emotional reactions or preconceived ideas. You can make this determination by looking at the writer's choice of words and seeing if the language is slanted and also by seeing if the writer ignores (or dismisses) opposing points of view.

With Web sites, you should try to determine if advertising that appears on the site affects its objectivity. Also try to determine if the site has a commercial purpose. If it does, the writer may have a conflict of interest. The same is true if a political group or special-interest group sponsors a site. These organizations have agendas, and you should make sure that they are not manipulating facts to promote their own goals.

Is the source current? A source is **current** if the information it contains is up-to-date. It is relatively easy to find out how current a print source is.

You can find the publication date of a book on the page that lists its publication information, and you can find the publication date of a periodical on its front cover.

Web sites and blogs, however, present problems. First, check to see when a Web site was last updated. (Some Web pages automatically display the current date, and you should not confuse this date with the date when the site was last updated.) Then, check the dates of individual articles. Even if a site has been updated recently, it may include information that is out-of-date. You should also see if the links on a site are still live. If a number of links are not functioning, you should question the currency of the site.

Is the source comprehensive? A source is **comprehensive** if it covers a subject in sufficient breadth and depth. How comprehensive a source needs to be depends on your purpose and your audience as well as on your assignment. For a short essay, an op-ed from a newspaper or a short article might give you enough information to support your points. A longer paper, however, would call for sources that treat your subject in depth, such as scholarly articles or even whole books.

You can determine the comprehensiveness of a source by seeing if it devotes a great deal of coverage to your subject. Does it discuss your topic in one or two paragraphs, or does it devote much more space to it — say, a chapter in a book or a major section of an article? You should also try to determine the level of the source. Although a source may be perfectly acceptable for high school research, it may not be comprehensive enough for college research.

USING WIKIPEDIA AS A SOURCE

Wikipedia — the most popular encyclopedia on the Web — has no single editor who checks entries for accuracy, credibility, objectivity, currency, and comprehensiveness. In many cases, the users themselves write and edit entries. For this reason, most college instructors *do not* consider *Wikipedia* reliable enough to be a credible source of information.

Exercise 3

Choose one source from the library and one from the Internet. Then, evaluate each source to determine if it is authoritative, accurate, objective, current, and comprehensive.

Integrating Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism

After you have gathered and evaluated your sources, it is time to think about how you can use this material in your essay. As you take notes, you should record relevant information in a computer file that you have set up for this purpose. These notes should be in the form of *paraphrase*, *summary*, and *quotation*. When you actually write your paper, you will **synthesize** this source material, blending it with your own ideas and interpretations—but making sure that your own ideas, not those of your sources, dominate your discussion. Finally, you should make certain that you do not inadvertently commit plagiarism.

Paraphrasing

When you **paraphrase**, you use your own words to restate a source's ideas in some detail, presenting the source's main idea, its key supporting points, and possibly an example or two. For this reason, a paraphrase may be only slightly shorter than the original.

You paraphrase when you want to present the information from a source without using its exact words. Paraphrasing is useful when you want to make a difficult discussion easier to understand while still giving readers a good sense of the original.

Keep in mind that when you paraphrase, you do not use the exact language or syntax of the original source, and you do not include your own analysis or opinions. The idea is to convey the ideas and emphasis of the source but not to mirror the order of its ideas or reproduce its exact words or sentence structure. If you decide to include a particularly memorable word or phrase from the source, be sure to put it in quotation marks.

Finally, remember that because a paraphrase relies on a writer's original ideas, *you must document the source*.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A PARAPHRASE

- Read the source you intend to paraphrase until you understand it.
- Jot down the main points of the source.
- As you write, retain the emphasis of the original.
- Make sure that you use your own words and phrases, not the language or syntax of your source.
- Do not include your own analysis or opinions.
- Be sure to provide documentation.

Here is a passage from page 22 of the article “*Wikipedia* and Beyond: Jimmy Wales’s Sprawling Vision” by Katherine Mangu-Ward, followed by a paraphrase.

ORIGINAL

An obvious question troubled, and continues to trouble, many people: how could an “encyclopedia that anyone can edit” possibly be reliable? Can truth be reached by a consensus of amateurs? Can a community of volunteers aggregate and assimilate knowledge . . . ?

PARAPHRASE

According to Katherine Mangu-Ward, there are serious questions about the reliability of *Wikipedia*’s articles because any user can add, change, or delete information. There is some doubt about whether *Wikipedia*’s unpaid and nonprofessional writers and editors can work together to create an accurate encyclopedia (22).

NOTE: This paraphrase appears in the Model Student Research Paper that begins on page 735.

Exercise 1

Select one or two paragraphs from any essay in this book, and then paraphrase them. Make sure your paraphrase communicates the main ideas and key supporting points of the passage you selected.

Summarizing

Unlike a paraphrase, which restates the ideas of a source in detail, a **summary** is just a brief restatement, in your own words, of a passage’s main idea. Because it is so general, a summary is always much shorter than the original.

When you summarize (as when you paraphrase) you use your own words, not the words of your source. Keep in mind that a summary can be one sentence or several sentences in length, depending on the length

and complexity of the original passage. Your summary expresses just the main idea of your source, not your own opinions or conclusions. Remember, because a summary expresses a writer's original idea, *you must document your source*.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A SUMMARY

- Read the source you intend to summarize until you understand it.
- Jot down the main idea of the source.
- Make sure that you use your own words and phrases, not the words and sentence structure of your source.
- Do not include your own analysis or opinions.
- Be sure to provide documentation.

Here is a summary of the passage from the article “*Wikipedia* and Beyond: Jimmy Wales’s Sprawling Vision” by Katherine Mangu-Ward.

SUMMARY

According to Katherine Mangu-Ward, *Wikipedia*’s reliability is open to question because anyone can edit its articles (22).

Exercise 2

Write a summary of the material that you paraphrased for Exercise 1. How is your summary different from your paraphrase?

Quoting

When you **quote**, you use a writer’s exact words as they appear in the source, including all punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Enclose all words from your source in quotation marks — *followed by appropriate documentation*. Because quotations distract readers, use a quotation only when you think a writer’s exact words will add something to your discussion. In addition, too many quotations will make your paper look as if it is simply a collection of other people’s words. As a rule, unless you have a definite reason to quote a source, you should paraphrase or summarize it instead.

WHEN TO QUOTE SOURCES

1. Quote when the original language is so memorable that paraphrasing would lessen the impact of the writer’s ideas.
2. Quote when a paraphrase or summary would change the meaning of the original.
3. Quote when the original language adds authority to your discussion. The exact words of an expert on your topic can help you make your point convincingly.

GUIDELINES FOR QUOTING

- Put all word and phrases that you take from your source in quotation marks.
- Make sure that you use the *exact* words of your source.
- Do not include too many quotations.
- Be sure to provide documentation.

Exercise 3

Reread the passage you chose to paraphrase in Exercise 1, and identify one or two quotations that you could include in your paraphrase. Which words or phrases did you decide to quote? Why?

Integrating Source Material into Your Writing

When you use source material in your writing, your goal is to integrate this material smoothly into your discussion. To distinguish your own ideas from those of your sources, you should always introduce source material and follow it with appropriate documentation.

Introduce paraphrases, summaries, and quotations with a phrase that identifies the source or its author. You can place this **identifying phrase** at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a sentence. Instead of always using the same words to introduce source material — *says* or *states*, for example — try using different words and phrases — *points out*, *observes*, *comments*, *notes*, *remarks*, or *concludes*.

IDENTIFYING PHRASE AT THE BEGINNING

According to Jonathan Dee, *Wikipedia* is “either one of the noblest experiments of the Internet age or a nightmare embodiment of relativism and the withering of intellectual standards” (36).

IDENTIFYING PHRASE IN THE MIDDLE

Wikipedia is “either one of the noblest experiments of the Internet age,” Jonathan Dee comments, “or a nightmare embodiment of relativism and the withering of intellectual standards” (36).

IDENTIFYING PHRASE AT THE END

Wikipedia is “either one of the noblest experiments of the Internet age or a nightmare embodiment of relativism and the withering of intellectual standards,” Jonathan Dee observes (36).

Synthesizing

When you write a **synthesis**, you combine paraphrases, summaries, and quotations from your sources with your own ideas. It is important to keep in mind that a synthesis is not simply a collection of your sources' ideas. On the contrary, a synthesis uses source material to support *your* ideas and to help readers see the topic *you* are writing about in a new way. (In this sense, a research paper is actually a long synthesis.) For this reason, when you write a synthesis, it is important to differentiate your ideas from those of your sources and to clearly show which piece of information comes from which source.

The following synthesis is a paragraph from the model MLA paper that begins on page 735. This paragraph synthesizes several sources as it discusses a problem of *Wikipedia* and other open-source Web sites: the ease with which text can be edited. Notice that the paragraph begins with the student's own ideas, and the rest of the paragraph includes source material that supports these ideas. (The examples that mention former president George W. Bush, George Soros, L. Ron Hubbard, abortion, and the Holocaust are not documented because they are considered **common knowledge** — in other words, this information can be found in a number of reference books.)

Another problem with *Wikipedia* is the ease with which entries can be edited. Because the content of wikis can be altered by anyone, individuals can easily vandalize content by inserting incorrect information, obscene language, or even nonsense into articles. Writers who are more interested in presenting their personal opinions than presenting reliable information frequently target certain entries. For example, entries for controversial people, such as President George W. Bush, financier George Soros, or Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, or for controversial subjects, such as abortion and the Holocaust, are routinely vandalized. Sometimes this vandalism can be extremely harmful. One notorious case of vandalism involved John Seigenthaler Sr., a journalist who was falsely accused in a *Wikipedia* entry of being involved in the assassinations of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy. As Seigenthaler's son has reported, the false information stayed on the site for more than four months and also appeared on at least two other sites that had used *Wikipedia* as their source (Seigenthaler). This incident, as well as many others, has caused people to question the reliability of *Wikipedia*. According to Jane Kirtley, the issue of reliability poses a real problem for the users of *Wikipedia*:

It's hard to defend an anonymous poster who uploads a damaging falsehood about someone on a Web site that purports to provide facts from a "neutral point of view. . . ." Either accuracy matters, or it doesn't. If the denizens of cyberspace want to be taken seriously, they might want to be responsible for what they produce. (66)

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A SYNTHESIS

1. Identify the key points discussed in each of your sources.
2. Identify the evidence that your sources use to support their views.
3. Clearly report what each source says, using summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. (Be sure to document your sources.)
4. Show how the sources are related to one another. For instance, do they agree on everything? Do they show directly opposite views, or do they agree on some points and disagree on others?
5. Decide on your own viewpoint, and show how the sources relate to your viewpoint.

Exercise 4

Look at the Model Student Research Paper that begins on page 735. Choose a paragraph (other than the one on page 715) that synthesizes source material. What kind of information (summary, paraphrase, or quotation) is being synthesized?

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism—whether intentional or unintentional—occurs when a writer passes off the words or ideas of others as his or her own. (Ideas can also be in the form of visuals, such as charts and graphs, or statistics.) Students plagiarize for a number of reasons. Some take the easy way out and buy a paper and submit it as if it were their own. This **intentional plagiarism** compromises a student's education as well as the educational process as a whole. Instructors assign papers for a reason, and if you do not do the work, then you miss a valuable opportunity to learn. For most students, however, plagiarism is **unintentional**.

Plagiarism can be the result of carelessness, poor time management, not knowing the conventions of documentation, laziness, or simply panic. For example, some students do not give themselves enough time to do an assignment, fail to keep track of their sources, inadvertently include the exact words of a source without using quotation marks, forget to include documentation, or cut and paste information from the Internet directly into their papers. In addition, some students have the mistaken belief that if information they find online does not have an identifiable author, it is all right to use it without documentation. Whatever the reason, whenever you present information from a source as if it were your own (intentionally or unintentionally), you are committing plagiarism — and *plagiarism is theft*.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

You can avoid plagiarism by keeping careful notes and by following these guidelines:

- **Give yourself enough time to do your research and to write your paper.** Do not put yourself in a position where you do not leave enough time to give your assignment the attention it requires.
- **Begin with a research plan.** Make a list of the steps you intend to follow, and estimate how much time they will take.
- **Ask for help.** If you run into trouble, don't panic. Ask your instructor or a reference librarian for help.
- **Do not cut and paste downloaded text directly into your paper.** Summarize and paraphrase this source material first. Boldface or highlight quotation marks so that you will recognize quotations when you are ready to include them in your paper.
- **Set up a system that enables you to keep track of your sources.** Create one or more files on your computer where you can store downloaded source information. (If you photocopy print sources, maintain a file for this material.) Create another set of files for your notes. Make sure you clearly name and date these files so that you know what is in them and when they were created.
- **Include full source information for all paraphrases and summaries as well as for quotations.** As you write, clearly differentiate between your ideas and those of your sources. Do not forget to include documentation. If you try to fill in documentation later, you may not remember where your information came from.
- **Keep a list of all the sources you have downloaded or have taken information from.** Make sure that you always have an up-to-date list of the sources you are using.

The easiest way to avoid plagiarism is simple – give credit where credit is due. In other words, document all information you borrow from your sources – not just paraphrases, summaries, and quotations but also statistics, images, and charts and graphs. It is not necessary, however, to document **common knowledge** – information that most people will probably know or factual information that is available in several different reference works. (Keep in mind that even though *information* might be common knowledge, you cannot use the exact *words* of a reference source without quoting the source and providing appropriate documentation.)

WHAT TO DOCUMENT

YOU MUST DOCUMENT

- All word-for-word quotations from a source
- All summaries and paraphrases of material from a source
- All ideas — opinions, judgments, and insights — that are not your own
- All tables, graphs, charts, statistics, and images you get from a source

YOU DO NOT NEED TO DOCUMENT

- Your own ideas
- Common knowledge
- Familiar quotations

Avoiding Common Errors That Lead to Plagiarism

The following paragraph is from *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet Is Killing Our Culture* by Andrew Keen, a source that student Philip Lau found during his research. This paragraph, and the four rules listed after it, will help you understand and avoid the most common causes of plagiarism.

ORIGINAL

The simple ownership of a computer and an Internet connection doesn't transform one into a serious journalist any more than having access to a kitchen makes one into a serious cook. But millions of amateur journalists think that it does. According to a June 2006 study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 34 percent of the 12 million bloggers in America consider their online "work" to be a form of journalism. That adds up to millions of unskilled, untrained, unpaid, unknown "journalists" — a thousandfold growth between 1996 and 2006 — spewing their (mis)information out in the cyberworld. (Andrew Keen. *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet Is Killing Our Culture*. New York: Doubleday, 2007. 47. Print.)

1. Identify Your Source

PLAGIARISM

One-third of the people who post material on Internet blogs think of themselves as serious journalists.

The writer does not quote Keen directly, but he still must identify Keen as the source of his paraphrased material. He can do this by adding an identifying phrase and parenthetical documentation.

CORRECT

According to Andrew Keen, one-third of the people who post material on Internet blogs think of themselves as serious journalists (47).

2. Place Borrowed Words in Quotation Marks

PLAGIARISM

According to Andrew Keen, the simple ownership of a computer and an Internet connection doesn't transform one into a serious journalist any more than having access to a kitchen makes one into a serious cook (47).

Although the writer cites Keen as his source, the passage incorrectly uses Keen's exact words without putting them in quotation marks. The writer must either place the borrowed words in quotation marks or paraphrase them.

CORRECT (BORROWED WORDS IN QUOTATION MARKS)

According to Andrew Keen, "The simple ownership of a computer and an Internet connection doesn't transform one into a serious journalist any more than having access to a kitchen makes one into a serious cook" (47).

3. Use Your Own Wording

PLAGIARISM

According to Andrew Keen, having a computer that can connect to the Internet does not make someone a real reporter, just as having a kitchen does not make someone a real cook. However, millions of these people think that they are real journalists. A Pew Internet and American Life study in June 2006 showed that about 4 million bloggers think they are journalists when they write on their blogs. Thus, millions of people who have no training may be putting erroneous information on the Internet (47).

Even though the writer acknowledges Keen as his source and provides parenthetical documentation, and even though he does not use Keen's exact words, his passage closely follows the order, emphasis, syntax, and phrasing of the original. In the following passage, the writer uses his own wording, quoting one distinctive phrase from his source.

CORRECT

According to Andrew Keen, although millions of American bloggers think of themselves as journalists, they are wrong. As Keen notes, "The simple ownership of a computer and an Internet connection doesn't transform one into a serious journalist any more than having access to a kitchen makes one into a serious cook" (47).

4. Distinguish Your Own Ideas from Your Source's Ideas

PLAGIARISM

The anonymous writers of *Wikipedia* articles are, in some ways, similar to those who put material on personal blogs. Although millions of American bloggers

think of themselves as journalists, they are wrong. “The simple ownership of a computer and an Internet connection doesn’t transform one into a serious journalist any more than having access to a kitchen makes one into a serious cook” (Keen 47).

In the preceding passage, it appears that only the quotation in the last sentence is borrowed from Keen’s book. In fact, however, the ideas in the second sentence are also Keen’s. The writer should use an identifying phrase (such as “According to Keen”) to acknowledge the borrowed material in this sentence and to indicate where it begins.

CORRECT

The anonymous writers of *Wikipedia* articles are, in some ways, similar to those who put material on personal blogs. According to Andrew Keen, although millions of American bloggers think of themselves as journalists, they are wrong. As Keen notes, “The simple ownership of a computer and an Internet connection doesn’t transform one into a serious journalist any more than having access to a kitchen makes one into a serious cook” (47).

Avoiding Plagiarism with Online Sources

Most students know that using long passages (or entire articles) from a print source without documenting the source is plagiarism. Unfortunately, many students assume that borrowing material found on a Web site or elsewhere online without documentation is acceptable. However, such borrowing is also plagiarism.

Perhaps students feel differently about online borrowing because it is so easy to cut and paste from an online source into a text document. They may also see copying online material as acceptable because – with authors often unidentified online – no one appears to take credit for the source. No matter what the explanation is for this casual treatment of online sources, instructors consider the use of undocumented words or ideas from online sources to be plagiarism. Therefore, just as you do for print sources, you must always document words, ideas, or visuals you get from online sources.

Exercise 5

Select an essay that you have written this semester that refers to a reading selection in this book. Reread both your essay and the selection in the book, and then decide where you could add each of the following:

- A quotation
- A summary of a paragraph
- A paraphrase of a paragraph

Exercise 6

Insert a quotation, a summary, and a paraphrase into the essay you reviewed for Exercise 5. Then, check to make sure that you have not committed plagiarism. Finally, consult the MLA section of the next chapter to help you document your sources correctly.

Documenting Sources: MLA

When you **document** a source, you tell readers where you have found the information you have used in your essay. The Modern Language Association (MLA) recommends the following documentation style for essays that use research.* This format consists of *parenthetical references* in the body of the paper that refer to a *works-cited* list at the end of the paper.

Parenthetical References in the Text

A **parenthetical reference** should include enough information to guide readers to a specific entry in your works-cited list.

A typical parenthetical reference consists of the author's last name and the page number: (Mangu-Ward 21). If you use more than one work by the same author, include a shortened form of the title in the parenthetical reference: (Mangu-Ward, "*Wikipedia* and Beyond" 25). Notice that the parenthetical references do not include a comma after the title or "p." before the page number.

Whenever possible, introduce information with a phrase that includes the author's name. (If you do this, include only the page number in parentheses.)

According to Andrew Keen, the absence of professional reporters and editors leads to erroneous information on *Wikipedia* (4).

* For further information, see the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (New York: Mod. Lang. Assn., 2009) or the MLA Web site at mla.org.

Place documentation so that it does not interrupt the flow of your ideas, preferably at the end of a sentence.

The format for parenthetical references departs from these guidelines in the following special situations:

1. When you are citing a work by two authors

It is impossible to access all Web sites by means of a single search engine (Sherman and Price 53).

2. When you are citing a work without a listed author

The technology of wikis is important, but many users are not aware of it ("7 Things").

3. When you are citing an indirect source

If you use a statement by one author that is quoted in the work of another author, indicate this by including the abbreviation qtd. in ("quoted in").

Marshall Poe notes that information on *Wikipedia* is "not exactly expert knowledge; it's common knowledge" (qtd. in Keen 39).

4. When you are citing an electronic source

Sources from the Internet or from library databases sometimes do not contain page numbers. If the electronic source uses paragraph, section, or screen numbers, use the abbreviation par. or sec., or the full word screen, followed by the corresponding number, in your documentation. (If the citation includes an author's name, place a comma after the name.)

On its Web site, *Wikipedia* warns its writers and editors to inspect sources carefully when they make assertions that are not generally held in academic circles ("Verifiability," sec. 3).

If the electronic source has no page numbers or markers of any kind, include just the name(s) of the author(s). Readers can tell that the citation refers to an electronic source when they consult the works-cited list.

A *Wikipedia* entry can be very deceptive, but some users may not realize that its information may not be reliable (McHenry).

GUIDELINES FOR FORMATTING QUOTATIONS

SHORT QUOTATIONS Quotations of no more than four typed lines are run in with the text of your paper. End punctuation comes after the parenthetical reference (which follows the quotation marks).

According to Andrew Keen, on *Wikipedia*, “the voice of a high school kid has equal value to that of an Ivy League scholar of a trained profession” (42).

LONG QUOTATIONS Quotations of more than four lines are set off from the text of your paper. Indent a long quotation one inch from the left-hand margin, and do not enclose the passage in quotation marks. The first line of a long quotation is not indented even if it is the beginning of a paragraph. If a quoted passage has more than one paragraph, indent the first line of each subsequent paragraph one-quarter inch. Introduce a long quotation with a colon, and place the parenthetical reference one space after the end punctuation.

According to Katherine Mangu-Ward, *Wikipedia* has changed the world:

Wikipedia was born as an experiment in aggregating information. But the reason it works isn’t that the world was clamoring for a new kind of encyclopedia. It took off because of the robust, self-policing community it created. . . . Despite its critics, it is transforming our everyday lives; as with Amazon, Google, and eBay, it is almost impossible to remember how much more circumscribed our world was before it existed. (21)

NOTE: Ellipses indicate that the student has deleted words from the quotation.

The Works-Cited List

The works-cited list includes all the works you **cite** (refer to) in your paper. Use the following guidelines to help you prepare your list.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE WORKS-CITED LIST

- Begin the works-cited list on a new page after the last page of your paper.
- Number the works-cited page as the next page of the paper.
- Center the heading Works Cited one inch from the top of the page; do not underline the heading or put it in quotation marks.
- Double-space the list.
- List entries alphabetically according to the author’s last name.
- Alphabetize unsigned articles according to the first major word of the title.
- Begin each entry flush with the left-hand margin.
- Indent second and subsequent lines one-half inch.
- Separate each division of the entry — author, title, and publication information — by a period and one space.

The following sample works-cited entries cover the situations you will encounter most often. Follow the formats exactly as they appear here.

Articles

GUIDELINES FOR MLA ARTICLE CITATIONS

To cite a periodical article in MLA style, follow these guidelines:

1. List the author, last name first.
2. Put the title of the article in quotation marks and italicize the title of the periodical.
3. Include the volume and issue number (when applicable), the year and date of publication, and the pages on which the full article appears (without the abbreviation *p.* or *pp.*).
4. Finally, include the medium of publication (*Print*, *Web*, and so on).

Journal Articles. A **journal** is a publication aimed at readers who know a lot about a particular subject — English or history, for example.

ARTICLE IN A JOURNAL

Provide the volume number followed by a period and the issue number. Leave no space after the period between the volume and issue numbers. List the date of publication (in parentheses), the pages of the article, and the medium of publication.

Markley, Robert. "Gulliver and the Japanese: The Limits of the Postcolonial Past." *Modern Language Quarterly* 65.3 (2004): 457-80. Print.

ARTICLE IN A JOURNAL THAT USES ONLY ISSUE NUMBERS

For a journal that uses only issue numbers, cite the issue number, publication date, page numbers, and medium.

Adelt, Ulrich. "Black, White and Blue: Racial Politics in B.B. King's Music from the 1960s." *Journal of Popular Culture* 44 (2011): 195-216. Print.

Magazine Articles. A **magazine** is a publication aimed at general readers. For this reason, it contains articles that are easier to understand than those in journals.

ARTICLE IN A MONTHLY OR BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE

Frequently, an article in a magazine does not appear on consecutive pages — for example, it might begin on page 43, skip to page 47, and continue on page 49. If this is the case, include only the first page, followed by a plus sign.

Edwards, Owen. "Kilroy Was Here." *Smithsonian* Oct. 2004: 40+. Print.

ARTICLE IN A WEEKLY OR BIWEEKLY MAGAZINE (SIGNED OR UNSIGNED)

Schley, Jim. "Laid Off, and Working Harder Than Ever." *Newsweek* 20 Sept. 2004: 16. Print.
 "Real Reform Post-Enron." *Nation* 4 Mar. 2002: 3. Print.

ARTICLE IN A NEWSPAPER

Bykowicz, Julie. "Man Faces Identity Theft Counts; College Worker Accused of Taking Students' Data." *Sun* [Baltimore] 18 Sept. 2004: 2B. Print.

EDITORIAL OR LETTER TO THE EDITOR

"An Un-American Way to Campaign." Editorial. *New York Times* 25 Sept. 2004, late ed.: A14. Print.

REVIEW IN A NEWSPAPER

Scott, A. O. "Forever Obsessing about Obsession." Rev. of *Adaptation*, dir. Spike Jonze. *New York Times* 6 Dec. 2002: F1+. Print.

REVIEW IN A WEEKLY OR BIWEEKLY MAGAZINE

Urquhart, Brian. "The Prospect of War." Rev. of *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*, by Kenneth M. Pollack. *New York Review of Books* 19 Dec. 2002: 16-22. Print.

REVIEW IN A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

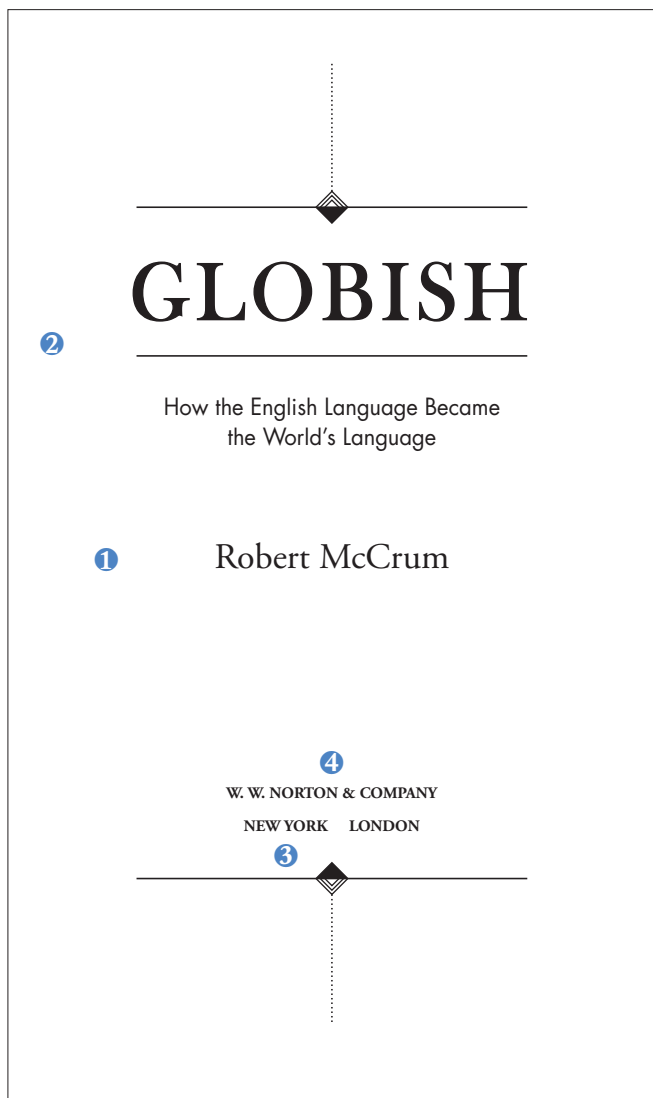
Jones, Kent. "The Lay of the Land." Rev. of *Sunshine State*, dir. John Sayles. *Film Commentary* May/June 2002: 22-24. Print.

Books**GUIDELINES FOR MLA BOOK CITATIONS**

To cite a print book in MLA style, follow these guidelines:

1. List the author with last name first.
2. Italicize the title.
3. Include the city of publication.
4. Use a shortened form of the publisher's name — for example, *Bedford for Bedford/St. Martin's*. Use the abbreviation *UP* for *University Press*, as in *Princeton UP* and *U of Chicago P*.
5. Include the date of publication, followed by a period.
6. Include the medium of publication (*Print*).

The two illustrations that follow show where to find the information you need for your book citations.



Title Page

S

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1 2
 McCrum, Robert. *Globish: How the English Language Became the*
 3 4 5 6
World's Language. New York: Norton, 2010. Print.

BOOKS BY ONE AUTHOR

McCrum, Robert. *Globish: How the English Language Became the*
World's Language. New York: Norton, 2010. Print.

BOOKS BY TWO OR THREE AUTHORS

List authors in the order in which they are listed on the book's title page. List second and subsequent authors with first names first.

Bigelow, Fran, and Helene Siegel. *Pure Chocolate*. New York: Broadway,
 2004. Print.

BOOKS BY MORE THAN THREE AUTHORS

List only the first author, followed by the abbreviation *et al.* (“and others”).

Ordeman, John L, et al. *Artists of the North American Wilderness: George and Belmore Browne*. New York: Warwick, 2004. Print.

TWO OR MORE BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

List two or more books by the same author in alphabetical order according to title. In each entry after the first, use three unspaced hyphens (followed by a period) instead of the author’s name.

Angelou, Maya. *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table: A Lifetime of Memories with Recipes*. New York: Random, 2004. Print.
---. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Bantam, 1985. Print.

EDITED BOOK

Whitman, Walt. *The Portable Walt Whitman*. Ed. Michael Warner. New York: Penguin, 2004. Print.

TRANSLATION

García Márquez, Gabriel. *Living to Tell the Tale*. Trans. Edith Grossman. New York: Knopf, 2004. Print.

REVISED EDITION

Bjelajac, David. *American Art: A Cultural History*. 2nd ed. New York: Prentice, 2004. Print.

ANTHOLOGY

Kirsznner, Laurie G., and Stephen R. Mandell, eds. *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*. 12th ed. Boston: Bedford, 2012. Print.

ESSAY IN AN ANTHOLOGY

Gansberg, Martin. “Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call the Police.” *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*. 12th ed. Ed. Laurie G. Kirsznner and Stephen R. Mandell. Boston: Bedford, 2012. 127-30. Print.

MORE THAN ONE ESSAY IN THE SAME ANTHOLOGY

List each essay separately with a cross-reference to the entire anthology.

Gansberg, Martin. “Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call the Police.” Kirsznner and Mandell 127-30.
Kirsznner, Laurie G., and Stephen R. Mandell, eds. *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*. 12th ed. Boston: Bedford, 2012. Print.

Staples, Brent. "Just Walk On By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space." Kirsznner and Mandell 240-43.

SECTION OR CHAPTER OF A BOOK

Gordimer, Nadine. "Loot." *"Loot" and Other Stories*. New York: Farrar, 2004. 1-6. Print.

INTRODUCTION, PREFACE, FOREWORD, OR AFTERWORD

Ingham, Patricia. Introduction. *Martin Chuzzlewit*. By Charles Dickens. London: Penguin, 1999. x-xxxii. Print.

MULTIVOLUME WORK

Malory, Thomas. *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Ed. Janet Cowen. 2 vols. London: Penguin, 1986. Print.

ARTICLE IN A REFERENCE WORK

For familiar reference works that publish new editions regularly, include only the edition (if given) and the year of publication.

"Civil Rights." *The World Book Encyclopedia*. 2006 ed. Print.

For less familiar reference works, provide a full citation.

Wagle, Greta. "Geisel, Theodor [Seuss]." *The Encyclopedia of American Literature*. Ed. Steven R. Serafin. New York: Continuum, 1999. Print.

Internet Sources

GUIDELINES FOR MLA INTERNET CITATIONS

When citing an Internet source, include the following information:

1. The name of the author or editor of the site
2. The title of the site (italicized)
3. The site's sponsor or publisher (if no sponsor or publisher is identified, write *N.p.*)
4. The date of electronic publication (if no publication date is available, write *n.d.*)
5. The medium of publication: *Web*.
6. The date you accessed the source

ENTIRE INTERNET SITE (SCHOLARLY PROJECT, INFORMATION DATABASE, JOURNAL, OR PROFESSIONAL WEB SITE)

The Dickens Project. Ed. Jon Michael Varese. U of California, Santa Cruz, 2004. Web. 2 Dec. 2011.

International Dialects of English Archive. Dept. of Theatre and Film, U of Kansas, 2004. Web. 4 Dec. 2011.

Words of the Year. Amer. Dialect Soc, 2008. Web. 18 Feb. 2011.

DOCUMENT WITHIN A WEB SITE

"Child and Adolescent Violence Research at the NIMH." *National Institute of Mental Health*, NIMH, 2005. Web. 2 Apr. 2011.

PERSONAL WEB SITE

Lynch, Jack. Home page. Jack Lynch, n.d. Web. 2 Jan. 2011.

ENTIRE ONLINE BOOK

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. 1813. *The Literature Network*. Web. 30 Nov. 2011.

Fielding, Henry. *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. Ed. William Allan Nielson. New York: Collier, 1917. *Bartleby.com: Great Books Online*. Web. 29 Nov. 2011.

PART OF AN ONLINE BOOK

Radford, Dollie. "At Night." *Poems*. London, 1910. *Victorian Women Writers Project*. Web. 17 Mar. 2011.

ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE SCHOLARLY JOURNAL

Condie, Kent C., and Jane Silverstone. "The Crust of the Colorado Plateau: New Views of an Old Arc." *Journal of Geology* 107.4 (1999): 387-97. Web. 9 Aug. 2011.

ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE REFERENCE BOOK OR ENCYCLOPEDIA

"Croatia." *The World Factbook 2004*. CIA, 30 Mar. 2004. Web. 30 Dec. 2007.

ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE NEWSPAPER

Krim, Jonathan. "FCC Preparing to Overhaul Telecom, Media Rules." *Washingtonpost.com*. Washington Post, 3 Jan. 2003. Web. 6 Jan. 2007.

ONLINE EDITORIAL

"Ersatz Eve." Editorial. *New York Times on the Web*. New York Times, 28 Dec. 2002. Web. 5 Jan. 2006.

ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE MAGAZINE

Press, Eyal, and Jennifer Washburn. "The At-Risk-Youth Industry." *Atlantic Online*. Atlantic Monthly Group, Dec. 2002. Web. 3 Jan. 2008.

REVIEW IN AN ONLINE PERIODICAL

Chocano, Carina. "Sympathy for the Misanthrope." Rev. of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, dir. Robert Weide, prod. Larry David. *Salon*. Salon Media Group, 4 Dec. 2002. Web. 17 Sept. 2005.

POSTING TO A DISCUSSION LIST

Thune, W. Scott. "Emotion and Rationality in Argument." *CCCC/97*
Online. N.p., 23 Mar. 1997. Web. 11 Nov. 2005.

BLOG POST

Singer, Judy Reene. "Why I Wrote My Elephant Books." *Romance Blog*
8 June 2010. Web. 9 Aug. 2010.

Other Internet Sources**A PAINTING ON THE INTERNET**

O'Keeffe, Georgia. *Evening Star, III*. 1917. Museum of Mod. Art, New
York. *MoMA: The Museum of Modern Art*. Web. 9 Nov. 2011.

A PHOTOGRAPH ON THE INTERNET

Cartier-Bresson, Henri. *William Faulkner, 1947*. Nat. Portrait Gallery,
Washington D.C. *Tête à tête: Portraits by Henri Cartier-Bresson*.
Web. 8 Oct. 2011.

A CARTOON ON THE INTERNET

Trudeau, Garry. "Doonesbury." Comic strip. *Washingtonpost.com*.
Washington Post, 7 Apr. 2005. Web. 5 May 2011.

A MAP OR CHART ON THE INTERNET

"Fort Worth, Texas." Map. *US Gazetteer*. US Census Bureau, n.d. Web.
26 Oct. 2011.

MATERIAL ACCESSED ON A CD-ROM, DISKETTE, OR MAGNETIC TAPE

In addition to the publication information, include the medium (CD-ROM, for example) and the distribution vendor, if relevant (UMI-Proquest, for example).

Aristotle. "Poetics." *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Ed. Jonathan
Barnes. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984. CD-ROM. Clayton:
IntelLex, 1994.

"Feminism." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford
UP, 1992. CD-ROM. Vers. 3.1. 2004.

EMAIL

Sullivan, John. "Re: Headnotes." Message to Laurie G. Kirsznern.
13 Dec. 2010. Email.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE OR VIDEO GAME

Provide the name of the author or developer of the software, if available; the title of the software, italicized; the publisher or distributor and

publication date; and the software platform (for example, Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3).

Sid Meier's Civilization IV: Colonization. Take 2 Interactive, 2008.
Windows.

MATERIAL FROM A LIBRARY DATABASE

For material retrieved from a library database such as *InfoTrac*, *LexisNexis*, *ProQuest*, or *EBSCOhost*, list the publication information for the source and provide the name of the database (such as *LexisNexis Academic*), italicized; the publication medium; and the date you accessed the source.

Benjamin, Roy. "The Stone of Stumbling in *Finnegans Wake*." *Journal of Modern Literature* 31.2 (2008): 66-78. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 7 Apr. 2009.

Carter, Jeff. "The Missing Piece of Education Reform." *Washington Post* 18 May 2008, regional ed.: B8. *LexisNexis Academic*. Web. 31 Mar. 2009.

Prince, Stephen. "Why Do Film Scholars Ignore Media Violence?" *Chronicle of Higher Education* 10 Aug. 2001: B18. *Academic Research Premier*. Web. 14 Feb. 2010.

Other Nonprint Sources

TELEVISION OR RADIO PROGRAM

"Prime Suspect 3." Writ. Lynda La Plante. *Mystery!* PBS. WNET, New York, 28 Apr. 1994. Television.

FILM, DVD, OR CD

Doubt. Dir. John Patrick Shanley. Perf. Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams, and Viola Davis. Miramax, 2008. DVD.

Man on Wire. Dir. James Marsh. Perf. Philippe Petit. Discovery Films, 2008. Film.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Garcetti, Gilbert. Personal interview. 7 May 2010.

Model Student Research Paper in MLA Style

The following research paper, "The Limitations of *Wikipedia*," by Philip Lau, follows MLA format as outlined in the previous pages.

Lau 1

Philip Lau
 Professor Carroll
 ENG 101
 23 Nov. 2011

The Limitations of *Wikipedia*

Introduction

When they get a research assignment, many students immediately go to the Internet to find sources. Searching the Web, they may discover a *Wikipedia* article on their topic. But is *Wikipedia* a reliable reference source for a research paper? There is quite a controversy over the use of *Wikipedia* as a source, but the answer seems to be no. Although *Wikipedia* may be a good starting point for general information about a topic, college-level research papers should rely on more authoritative sources.

Thesis statement

A wiki is software that allows people to collaborate in forming the content of a Web site. With a wiki, anyone with a browser can edit, modify, rearrange, or delete content. It is not necessary to know HTML (hypertext mark-up language) or to work in HTML code. The word *wiki* comes from the word *wikiwiki*, which means “quick” or “fast” in Hawaiian. The most popular wiki is *Wikipedia*, a free, Internet-based encyclopedia that relies on the collaboration, consensus, openness, and trust of those who post and edit entries. Anyone can learn to write a *Wikipedia* article by clicking on “How to write an article” or edit an entry by clicking on “Edit this entry.” All revisions are visible to everyone who clicks on “history” (“Verifiability”). According to Katherine Mangu-Ward, the success of *Wikipedia* “springs largely from [its founder’s] willingness to trust large aggregations of human beings to produce good outcomes . . .” (26). This collaboration enables *Wikipedia* to publish a wide variety of entries on unusual, specialized topics (see fig. 1). So far, there are over four million *Wikipedia* articles (Rothenberg).

Paragraph combines factual information, found in more than one source, with quotations from “Verifiability” and Mangu-Ward, and a statistic from Rothenberg

Pentamethylcyclopentadiene

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

1,2,3,4,5-Pentamethylcyclopentadiene is a cyclic diolefin with the formula C_5Me_5H ($Me = CH_3$).^[1] 1,2,3,4,5-Pentamethylcyclopentadiene is the precursor to the ligand 1,2,3,4,5-pentamethylcyclopentadienyl, which is often denoted as Cp^* (to signify the five methyl groups radiating from the periphery of this ligand as in a five-pointed star). In contrast to less substituted cyclopentadiene derivatives, Cp^*H is not prone to dimerization.

Contents [hide]

- Synthesis
- Synthesis of Cp^* complexes
- Comparison of Cp^* with Cp
- See also
- References

Synthesis [edit]

Pentamethylcyclopentadiene is commercially available. It was first prepared from ligaldehyde via 1,2,3,4,5-pentamethylcyclopent-2-en-1-ol.^[2] Alternatively 2-butyllithium adds to ethylacetate followed by acid-catalyzed dehydrocyclization.^{[3][4]}

$$MeCH=C(Li)Me + MeC(O)OEt \rightarrow (MeCH=C(Me))_2C(OLi)Me + LiOEt$$

$$(MeCH=C(Me))_2C(OLi)Me + H^+ \rightarrow Cp^*H + H_2O + Li^+$$

Synthesis of Cp^* complexes [edit]

Some representative reactions leading to such Cp^* -metal complexes follow:^[5]

$$Cp^*H + C_6H_5Li \rightarrow Cp^*Li + C_6H_6$$

$$Cp^*Li + TiCl_4 \rightarrow Cp^*TiCl_3 + LiCl$$

$$2 Cp^*H + 2 Fe(CO)_5 \rightarrow [Cp^*Fe(CO)_2]_2 + H_2$$

For the related Cp complex, see cyclopentadienyliron dicarbonyl dimer.

An instructive but obsolete route to Cp^* complexes involves the use of hexamethyl Dewar benzene. This method was traditionally used for preparation of the chloro-bridged dimer $[Cp^*RhCl_2]_2$.

Comparison of Cp^* with Cp [edit]

Cp^*H is an important precursor to organometallic compounds arising from the binding of the five ring-carbon atoms in C_5Me_5 , or Cp^* , to metals.^[6] Relative to the more common cyclopentadienyl (Cp) ligand, pentamethylcyclopentadienyl (Cp^*) offers certain features that are often advantageous. Being more electron-rich, Cp^* is a stronger donor and is less easily removed from the metal. Consequently its complexes exhibit increased thermal stability. Its steric bulk allows the isolation of complexes with fragile ligands. Its bulk also attenuates intermolecular interactions, decreasing the tendency to form polymeric structures. Its complexes also tend to be highly soluble in non-polar solvents.

Pentamethylcyclopentadiene

Identifiers

CAS number [4045-44-7]

SMILES CC1=C(C)C(C)C(C)C1C

Properties

Molecular formula C_5H_{10}

Molar mass 136.24 g/mol

Boiling point $55-60^\circ C$ (13 mm Hg)

Solubility in water Sparingly soluble

Hazards

Flash point $114^\circ C$

Except where noted otherwise, data are given for materials in their standard state (at 25 $^\circ C$, 100 kPa)

Infobox disclaimer and references

Cp*-metal Complexes

Cp^*_2Fe	yellow
Cp^*TiCl_3	red
$[Cp^*Fe(CO)_2]_2$	red-violet
$[Cp^*RhCl_2]_2$	red
$Cp^*Re(CO)_3$	colorless
$Cp^*Mo(CO)_2CH_3$	orange

Fig. 1. Wikipedia entry for a chemical compound. "Pentamethylcyclopentadiene." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 3 Oct. 2010. Web. 9 Dec. 2010.

Wikipedia includes two kinds of content. The first kind of content is factual—that is, information that can be verified or proved true. Factual material from reliable sources is more trustworthy than material from other sources. In fact, *Wikipedia's* own site states, "In general, the most reliable sources are peer-reviewed journals and books published in university presses; university-level textbooks; magazines, journals, and books published by respected publishing houses; and mainstream newspapers" ("Verifiability"). Most reliable publications have staff whose job it is to check facts. However,

Paragraph combines student's own ideas with quotations and paraphrases from "Verifiability"

Lau 3

because *Wikipedia* relies on a community of people to write articles, no single person or group of people is responsible for checking facts. The theory is that after enough people have worked on an article, any errors in fact will have been found and corrected. However, this assumption is not necessarily true.

The second kind of content consists of opinions. Because an opinion is a belief or judgment, opinions—by definition—tend to be one-sided. So, since *Wikipedia* entries are supposed to be objective, *Wikipedia*'s policy statement says that entries for controversial topics should include opinions that reflect the various sides of the issue ("Verifiability"). In addition, *Wikipedia* warns users against believing everything they read, even what they read on its own site: "Anyone can create a website or pay to have a book published, then claim to be an expert . . ." ("Verifiability"). It also advises readers to examine sources carefully, especially when they present controversial opinions or make claims that contradict established academic views ("Verifiability"). However, it is all up to the users; no one person checks to make sure that these guidelines are followed.

In spite of its stated policies, then, *Wikipedia* is open to certain kinds of problems. One of the problems comes from its assumption that the knowledge of the community is more valuable than the knowledge of acknowledged experts in a field. Larry Sanger, one of the founders of *Wikipedia*, who has since left the project, concedes that *Wikipedia* has a problem with "anti-elitism, or lack of respect for expertise"; in fact, he refers to its "horror of the traditional deference to experience," which he claims explains why acknowledged experts avoid writing or editing articles on *Wikipedia*. Those who criticize *Wikipedia* often point to its irrational trust in the knowledge of the community. According to Andrew Keen, *Wikipedia* is virtually "the blind leading the blind—infinite monkeys providing infinite information for infinite readers, perpetuating the cycle of misinformation and ignorance" (4). On *Wikipedia*,

Paragraph
combines
quotation and
paraphrases from
"Verifiability" with
student's own ideas

Paragraph
combines
quotation and
paraphrase from
Sanger with a
quotation from
Keen

Keen complains, “the voice of a high school kid has equal value to that of an Ivy League scholar . . .” (42).

Another problem with *Wikipedia* is the ease with which entries can be edited. Because the content of wikis can be altered by anyone, individuals can easily vandalize content by inserting incorrect information, obscene language, or even nonsense into articles. Writers who are more interested in presenting their personal opinions than presenting reliable information frequently target certain entries. For example, entries for controversial people, such as President George W. Bush, financier George Soros, or Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, or for controversial subjects, such as abortion and the Holocaust, are routinely vandalized. Sometimes this vandalism can be extremely harmful. One notorious case of vandalism involved John Seigenthaler Sr., a journalist who was falsely accused in a *Wikipedia* entry of being involved in the assassinations of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy. As Seigenthaler’s son has reported, the false information stayed on the site for more than four months and also appeared on at least two other sites that had used *Wikipedia* as their source (Seigenthaler). This incident, as well as many others, has caused people to question the reliability of *Wikipedia*. According to Jane Kirtley, the issue of reliability poses a real problem for the users of *Wikipedia*:

It’s hard to defend an anonymous poster who uploads a damaging falsehood about someone on a Web site that purports to provide facts from a “neutral point of view. . . .” Either accuracy matters, or it doesn’t. If the denizens of cyberspace want to be taken seriously, they might want to be responsible for what they produce. (66)

Bias is another problem for *Wikipedia*. Some critics have accused *Wikipedia* of having a liberal bias; in fact, a

Paragraph contains a long quotation from Kirtley, student’s summary of the Seigenthaler article, and facts that were found in several sources

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Paragraph contains paraphrases from "Examples" and Wales as well as student's own conclusions

competitor, Conservapedia, lists many examples of liberal bias in *Wikipedia* entries. Accusing *Wikipedia* of being anti-American and anti-Christian ("Examples"), Conservapedia questions the true agenda of the *Wikipedia* community. In a *Time* article, Jimmy Wales, founder of *Wikipedia*, denies this liberal bias and accuses Conservapedia of having a conservative bias (6). Still, such accusations do raise questions about the credibility of *Wikipedia*.

Paragraph combines ideas found in several sources, a paraphrase from Hafner, and student's own ideas

Wikipedia has tried to correct some of the problems that its critics have pointed out. In response to criticism of its policy of allowing writers and editors to remain anonymous, Jimmy Wales changed *Wikipedia's* policy. Now, writers and editors have to provide their user names and thus take responsibility for the content they contribute. In addition, *Wikipedia* has made it possible for administrators to block certain sites from those wishing to edit them and to prevent certain writers and editors from posting or changing information. In addition, users must now be registered with *Wikipedia* for four days before they can change certain controversial entries (Hafner). However, authorship is still a problem. Most readers have no idea who has written an article that they are reading or whether or not that person can be trusted. Given *Wikipedia's* basic philosophy, there is no way to solve this problem.

Paragraph combines ideas found in several sources with paraphrases and quotations from McHenry

Of course, even traditional encyclopedias have shortcomings. For example, a study by the journal *Nature* found that although *Wikipedia* included errors, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* also did. Nevertheless, Robert McHenry, a former editor of *Britannica*, points out that *Wikipedia* articles often do not get better through editing; instead, they frequently get worse. He goes on to say that *Wikipedia* suffers because it lacks the oversight that only a good editor can provide: "skills, knowledge, experience, and maybe a touch of talent." McHenry observes that out of concern for *Britannica's* reputation, at

least four people check every article for accuracy. He points out that professional editors do more than just check spelling and grammar; they also stand in “for the eventual reader in order to assure that what was written was clear, logical, and to the point.” Since *Wikipedia* has no professional editors, its writing may be ungrammatical, stylistically awkward, or unclear.

Supporters of *Wikipedia* defend the site against those charges, noting that more traditional sources, such as respected peer-reviewed journals, also have their problems. For example, very new material is likely to be underrepresented or even omitted by a traditional print encyclopedia, which is published only every few years. In addition, some reviewers of articles that appear in peer-reviewed journals may have conflicts of interest. For example, a reviewer might reject an article that challenges his or her own work, or editors may favor certain authors over others. Also, it may be possible for reviewers to identify the work of a competitor, especially if the number of people working in a field is relatively small, and therefore let bias influence their evaluation of an article. Another problem is that it takes a long time for articles in peer-reviewed journals to get into print. Critics point out that by the time an article in a peer-reviewed journal gets into print, it may be outdated. As a result, peer-reviewed journals may not be as objective or as up-to-date as readers think they are.

Wikipedia is easy to access and easy to use. It includes information on just about any topic a researcher might want to explore. Still, it is not a reliable source for serious research, primarily because of the many questions that have been raised about the reliability of its articles. Therefore, many high schools and colleges do not allow students to cite *Wikipedia* as a source. Granted, there are times when *Wikipedia* can be useful. For example, visitors to the site can skim articles on a variety of topics, and this preliminary reading can help them find or narrow a research topic. In addition, students can often

Paragraph
contains ideas
found in several
sources and
student's own
conclusions

Conclusion

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find general information on *Wikipedia* about very current topics that may not be treated anywhere else. Finally, the computer links that appear at the end of most *Wikipedia* articles can be a good starting point for research. In general, however, because of the questionable authorship of its entries and the lack of expertise and objectivity of some (if not many) of its contributors, *Wikipedia* is not a reliable source.

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APPENDIX

Documenting Sources: APA

APA style was developed by the American Psychological Association and is commonly used in the social sciences. Sources are cited to help readers in the social sciences understand new ideas in the context of previous research and show them how current the sources are.*

There are several reasons to cite sources. Readers expect arguments to be well supported by evidence and want to be able to locate those sources if they decide to delve deeper. Citing sources is also important to give credit to writers and to avoid plagiarism.

Using Parenthetical References

In APA style, parenthetical references refer readers to sources in the list of references at the end of the paper. In general, parenthetical references should include the author and year of publication. You may also include page numbers if you are quoting directly from a source. Here are some more specific guidelines:

- Refer to the author's name in the text, or cite it, along with the year of publication, in parentheses: Vang asserted . . . (2004) or (Vang, 2004). When quoting words from a source, include the page number: (Vang, 2004, p. 33). Once you have cited a source, you can refer to the author a second time without the publication date so long as it is clear you are referring to the same source: Vang also found . . .
- If no author is identified, use a shortened version of the title: ("Mind," 2007).
- If you are citing multiple works by the same author or authors published in the same year, add a lowercase letter with the year: (Peters, 2004a), (Peters, 2004b), and so on.

* American Psychological Association, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition (2010).

- When a work has two authors, cite both names and the year: (Tabor & Garza, 2006). For three to five authors, cite all authors in the first reference, with the year; for subsequent references, use the first author followed by et al. When a work has six or more authors, use the first author's name followed by et al. and the year: (McCarthy et al., 2010).
- Omit page numbers or dates if the source does not include them. (Try to find a .pdf version of an online source if it is an option; it will usually include page numbers.)
- If you quote a source found in another source, indicate the original author and the source in which you found it: Psychologist Gary Wells asserted . . . (as cited in Doyle, 2005, p. 122).
- Include in-text references to personal communications and interviews by providing the person's name, the phrase "personal communication," and the date: (J. Smith, personal communication, February 12, 2011). Do not include these sources in your reference list.

Parenthetical citations must be included for all sources that are not common knowledge, whether you are paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting directly from a source. If a direct quotation is forty words or less, include it within quotation marks without separating it from the rest of the text. When quoting a passage that is more than forty words long, indent the entire block of quoted text one-half inch from the left margin, and do not enclose it in quotation marks. It should be double-spaced, like the rest of the paper.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE REFERENCE LIST

Start your list of references on a separate page at the end of your paper. Center the title *References* at the top of the page.

- Begin each reference flush with the left margin, and indent subsequent lines one-half inch.
- List your references alphabetically by the author's last name (or by the first major word of the title if no author is identified).
- If the list includes references for two sources by the same author, list them in order by the year of publication, starting with the earliest.
- Italicize titles of books and periodicals. Do not italicize article titles or enclose them in quotation marks.
- For titles of books and articles, capitalize the first word of the title and subtitle as well as any proper nouns. Capitalize words in a periodical title as in the original.

When you have completed your reference list, go through your paper and make sure that every reference cited is included in the list in the correct order.

Examples of APA Citations

The following are examples of APA citations.

Periodicals

ARTICLE IN A JOURNAL PAGINATED BY VOLUME

Shah, N. A. (2006). Women's human rights in the Koran: An interpretive approach. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 28, 868–902.

ARTICLE IN A JOURNAL PAGINATED BY ISSUE

Lamb, B., & Keller, H. (2007). Understanding cultural models of parenting: The role of intracultural variation and response style. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 38(1), 50–57.

MAGAZINE ARTICLE

Collins, L. (2009, April 20). The vertical tourist. *The New Yorker*, 85(10), 68–79.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

DeParle, J. (2009, April 19). Struggling to rise in suburbs where failing means fitting in. *The New York Times*, pp. A1, A20–A21.

Books

BOOKS BY ONE AUTHOR

McCrum, Robert. (2010). *Globish: How the English language became the world's language*. New York, NY: Norton.

BOOKS BY TWO TO SEVEN AUTHORS

Guerrero, L. K., & Floyd, K. (2006). *Nonverbal communication in close relationships*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

BOOKS BY EIGHT OR MORE AUTHORS

Mulvaney, S. A., Mudasiru, E., Schlundt, D. G., Baughman, C. L., Fleming, M., VanderWoude, A., . . . Rothman, R. (2008). Self-management in Type 2 diabetes: The adolescent perspective. *The Diabetes Educator*, 34, 118–127.

EDITED BOOK

Brummett, B. (Ed.). (2008). *Uncovering hidden rhetorics: Social issues in disguise*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

ESSAY IN AN EDITED BOOK

Alberts, H. C. (2006). The multiple transformations of Miami. In H. Smith & O. J. Furuseth (Eds.), *Latinos in the new south: Transformations of place* (pp. 135–151). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

TRANSLATION

Courville, S. (2008). *Quebec: A historical geography* (R. Howard, Trans.). Vancouver, Canada: UBC.

REVISED EDITION

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. B. (2008). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Internet Sources**ENTIRE WEB SITE**

Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity, United Nations Biodiversity Programmes. (2005). *Convention on biological diversity*. Retrieved from <http://www.biodiv.org/>

WEB PAGE WITHIN A WEB SITE

The great divide: How Westerners and Muslims view each other. (2006, July 6). In *Pew global attitudes project*. Retrieved from <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=253>

UNIVERSITY PROGRAM WEB SITE

National security archive. (2009). Retrieved from George Washington University website: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/>

JOURNAL ARTICLE FOUND ON THE WEB WITH A DOI

Because Web sites change and disappear without warning, many publishers have started adding a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) to their articles. A DOI is a unique number that can be retrieved no matter where the article ends up on the Web.

To locate an article with a known DOI, go to the DOI system Web site at <http://dx.doi.org/> and type in the DOI number. When citing an article that has a DOI (usually found on the first page of the article), you do not need to include a URL in your reference or the name of the database in which you may have found the article.

Geers, A. L., Wellman, J. A., & Lassiter, G. D. (2009). Dispositional optimism and engagement: The moderating influence of goal prioritization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94, 913–932. doi:10.1037/a0014746

JOURNAL ARTICLE FOUND ON THE WEB WITHOUT A DOI

Bendetto, M. M. (2008). Crisis on the immigration bench: An ethical perspective. *Brooklyn Law Review*, 73, 467–523. Retrieved from <http://brooklaw.edu/students/journals/blr.php/>

JOURNAL ARTICLE FROM AN ELECTRONIC DATABASE

The name and URL of the database are not required for citations if a DOI is available. If no DOI is available, provide the home page URL of the journal or of the book or report publisher.

Staub, E., & Pearlman, L. A. (2009). Reducing intergroup prejudice and conflict: A commentary. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 11, 3–23. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/journals/psp/>

ELECTRONIC BOOK

Katz, R. N. (Ed.). (2008). *The tower and the cloud: Higher education in an era of cloud computing*. Retrieved from <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/PUB7202.pdf>

VIDEO BLOG POST

Baggs, A. (2007, January 14). In my language [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jny1M1hI2jc>

PRESENTATION SLIDES

Hall, M. E. (2009) *Who moved my job!?: A psychology of job-loss "trauma"* [Presentation slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.cew.wisc.edu/docs/WMMJ%20PwrPt-Summry2.ppt>

Model Student Paper in APA Style

The following research paper follows APA format as outlined in the preceding pages. Note that this paper has the same content as the MLA paper on pages 735–742 but follows APA conventions. For this reason, it includes an abstract, a title page, and internal headings.

Running head: THE LIMITATIONS OF *WIKIPEDIA*

1

The Limitations of *Wikipedia*

Philip Lau
Professor Carroll
ENG 101
23 Nov. 2011

THE LIMITATIONS OF *WIKIPEDIA*

2

Abstract

Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia with entries that are created and updated by users rather than by editors. This paper examines the benefits and drawbacks associated with *Wikipedia's* open-forum approach. *Wikipedia* contains information about a great number of topics and could be a good resource for students who are trying to narrow the focus of their essays. However, many educators believe that the information is unreliable and therefore should not be used for scholarly research. They are concerned that entries that can be edited by anyone, regardless of their expertise on the subject, might not be accurate. Although *Wikipedia* claims to be as accurate as a traditional encyclopedia, there has been at least one instance of inflammatory and untrue information remaining on the site for months and being disseminated through other outlets as fact. Because there is no way to determine the expertise of the authors or the validity of the information on *Wikipedia*, it should not be considered a reliable source.

THE LIMITATIONS OF WIKIPEDIA

3

Introduction

The Limitations of *Wikipedia*

When they get a research assignment, many students immediately go to the Internet to find sources. Searching the Web, they may discover a *Wikipedia* article on their topic. But is *Wikipedia* a reliable reference source for a research paper? There is quite a controversy over the use of *Wikipedia* as a source, but the answer seems to be no. Although *Wikipedia* may be a good starting point for general information about a topic, college-level research papers should rely on more authoritative sources.

Thesis statement

A wiki is software that allows people to collaborate in forming the content of a Web site. With a wiki, anyone with a browser can edit, modify, rearrange, or delete content. It is not necessary to know HTML (hypertext mark-up language) or to work in HTML code. The word *wiki* comes from the word *wikiwiki*, which means “quick” or “fast” in Hawaiian. The most popular wiki is *Wikipedia*, a free, Internet-based encyclopedia that relies on the collaboration, consensus, openness, and trust of those who post and edit entries. Anyone can learn to write a *Wikipedia* article by clicking on “How to write an article” or edit an entry by clicking on “Edit this entry.” All revisions are visible to everyone who clicks on “history” (“Verifiability,” 2007). According to Katherine Mangu-Ward (2007), the success of *Wikipedia* “springs largely from [its founder’s] willingness to trust large aggregations of human beings to produce good outcomes . . .” (p. 26). This collaboration enables *Wikipedia* to publish a wide variety of entries on unusual, specialized topics (see Figure 1). So far, there are over four million *Wikipedia* articles (Rothenberg, 2006).

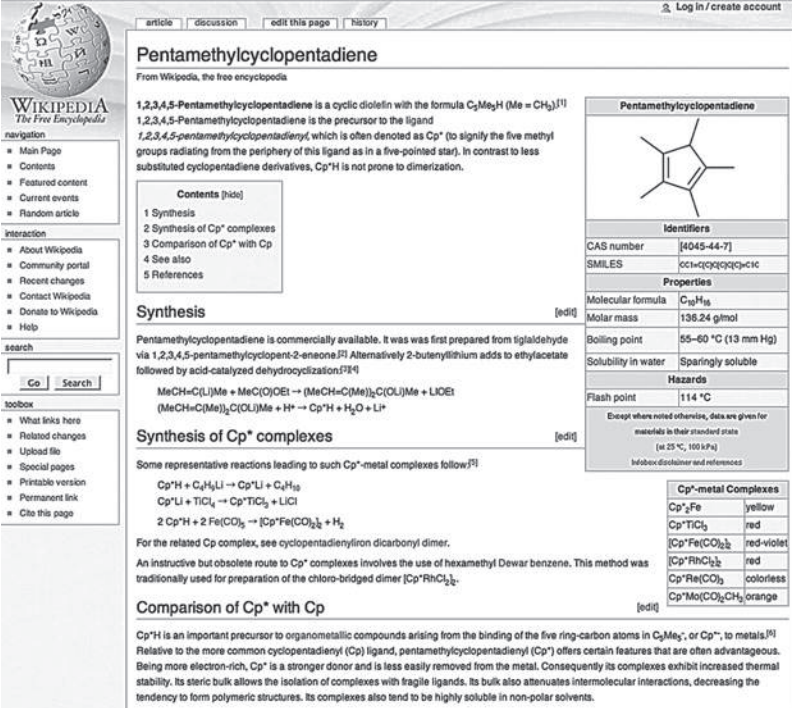
Paragraph combines factual information, found in more than one source, with quotations from “Verifiability” and Mangu-Ward, and a statistic from Rothenberg.

Wikipedia’s Two Kinds of Content

Wikipedia includes two kinds of content. The first kind of content is factual—that is, information that can be verified or proved true. Factual material from reliable sources

THE LIMITATIONS OF WIKIPEDIA

4



Pentamethylcyclopentadiene
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

1,2,3,4,5-Pentamethylcyclopentadiene is a cyclic diolefin with the formula C_5Me_5H ($Me = CH_3$).^[1] 1,2,3,4,5-Pentamethylcyclopentadiene is the precursor to the ligand 1,2,3,4,5-pentamethylcyclopentadienyl, which is often denoted as Cp^* (to signify the five methyl groups radiating from the periphery of this ligand as in a five-pointed star). In contrast to less substituted cyclopentadiene derivatives, Cp^*H is not prone to dimerization.

Contents [hide]

- Synthesis
- Synthesis of Cp^* complexes
- Comparison of Cp^* with Cp
- See also
- References

Synthesis [edit]

Pentamethylcyclopentadiene is commercially available. It was first prepared from tiglaldehyde via 1,2,3,4,5-pentamethylcyclopent-2-eneone.^[1] Alternatively 2-butenyllithium adds to ethylacetate followed by acid-catalyzed dehydrocyclization.^{[1][4]}

$$MeCH=C(Li)Me + MeC(O)OEt \rightarrow (MeCH=C(Me))_2C(OLi)Me + LiOEt$$

$$(MeCH=C(Me))_2C(OLi)Me + H^+ \rightarrow Cp^*H + H_2O + Li^+$$

Synthesis of Cp^* complexes [edit]

Some representative reactions leading to such Cp^* -metal complexes follow^[1]

$$Cp^*H + C_6H_5Li \rightarrow Cp^*Li + C_6H_6$$

$$Cp^*Li + TiCl_4 \rightarrow Cp^*TiCl_3 + LiCl$$

$$2 Cp^*H + 2 Fe(CO)_5 \rightarrow [Cp^*Fe(CO)_2]_2 + H_2$$

For the related Cp complex, see cyclopentadienyliron dicarbonyl dimer.

An instructive but obsolete route to Cp^* complexes involves the use of hexamethyl Dewar benzene. This method was traditionally used for preparation of the chloro-bridged dimer $[Cp^*RhCl_2]_2$.

Comparison of Cp^* with Cp [edit]

Cp^*H is an important precursor to organometallic compounds arising from the binding of the five ring-carbon atoms in C_5Me_5 , or Cp^* , to metals.^[1] Relative to the more common cyclopentadienyl (Cp) ligand, pentamethylcyclopentadienyl (Cp^*) offers certain features that are often advantageous. Being more electron-rich, Cp^* is a stronger donor and is less easily removed from the metal. Consequently its complexes exhibit increased thermal stability. Its steric bulk allows the isolation of complexes with fragile ligands. Its bulk also attenuates intermolecular interactions, decreasing the tendency to form polymeric structures. Its complexes also tend to be highly soluble in non-polar solvents.

Pentamethylcyclopentadiene

Identifiers

CAS number [4045-44-7]
 SMILES CC1=C(C)C(C)C(C)C1C

Properties

Molecular formula $C_{10}H_{16}$
 Molar mass 136.24 g/mol
 Boiling point $55-60\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ (13 mm Hg)
 Solubility in water Sparingly soluble

Hazards

Flash point $114\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$
 Except where noted otherwise, data are given for materials in their standard state (at 25 $^\circ\text{C}$, 100 kPa)
 Infobox disclaimer and references

Cp^* -metal Complexes

Cp^*_2Fe	yellow
Cp^*TiCl_3	red
$[Cp^*Fe(CO)_2]_2$	red-violet
$[Cp^*Rh(CO)_2]_2$	red
$Cp^*Re(CO)_3$	colorless
$Cp^*Mo(CO)_2CH_3$	orange

Figure 1. Wikipedia entry for a chemical compound. Pentamethylcyclopentadiene (2010, October 3). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentamethylcyclopentadiene>

is more trustworthy than material from other sources. In fact, *Wikipedia's* own site states, "In general, the most reliable sources are peer-reviewed journals and books published in university presses; university-level textbooks; magazines, journals, and books published by respected publishing houses; and mainstream newspapers" ("Verifiability," 2007). Most reliable publications have staff whose job it is to check facts. However, because *Wikipedia* relies on a community of people to write articles, no single person or group of people is responsible for checking facts. The theory is that after enough people have

Paragraph combines student's own ideas with quotations and paraphrases from "Verifiability"

THE LIMITATIONS OF WIKIPEDIA

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worked on an article, any errors in fact will have been found and corrected. However, this assumption is not necessarily true.

The second kind of content consists of opinions. Because an opinion is a belief or judgment, opinions—by definition—tend to be one-sided. So, since *Wikipedia* entries are supposed to be objective, *Wikipedia*'s policy statement says that entries for controversial topics should include opinions that reflect the various sides of the issue ("Verifiability," 2007). In addition, *Wikipedia* warns users against believing everything they read, even what they read on its own site: "Anyone can create a website or pay to have a book published, then claim to be an expert . . ." ("Verifiability," 2007). It also advises readers to examine sources carefully, especially when they present controversial opinions or make claims that contradict established academic views ("Verifiability," 2007). However, it is all up to the users; no one person checks to make sure that these guidelines are followed.

Errors and Other Problems with *Wikipedia*

In spite of its stated policies, then, *Wikipedia* is open to certain kinds of problems. One problem comes from its assumption that the knowledge of the *Wikipedia* community is more valuable than the knowledge of acknowledged experts in a field. Larry Sanger (2004), one of the founders of *Wikipedia*, who has since left the project, concedes that *Wikipedia* has a problem with "anti-elitism, or lack of respect for expertise"; in fact, he refers to its "horror of the traditional deference to experience," which he claims explains why acknowledged experts avoid writing or editing articles on *Wikipedia*. Those who criticize *Wikipedia* often point to its irrational trust in the knowledge of the community. According to Andrew Keen (2007), *Wikipedia* is virtually "the blind leading the blind—infinite monkeys providing infinite information for

Paragraph combines quotation and paraphrases from "Verifiability" with student's own ideas

Paragraph combines quotations and paraphrases from Sanger with a quotation from Keen

THE LIMITATIONS OF WIKIPEDIA

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infinite readers, perpetuating the cycle of misinformation and ignorance" (p. 4). On *Wikipedia*, Keen (2007) complains, "the voice of a high school kid has equal value to that of an Ivy League scholar . . ." (p. 42).

Another problem with *Wikipedia* is the ease with which entries can be edited. Because the content of wikis can be altered by anyone, individuals can easily vandalize content by inserting incorrect information, obscene language, or even nonsense into articles. Writers who are more interested in presenting their personal opinions than presenting reliable information frequently target certain entries. For example, entries for controversial people, such as President George W. Bush, financier George Soros, or Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, or for controversial subjects, such as abortion and the Holocaust, are routinely vandalized. Sometimes this vandalism can be extremely harmful. One notorious case of vandalism involved John Seigenthaler Sr., a journalist who was falsely accused in a *Wikipedia* entry of being involved in the assassinations of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy. As Seigenthaler's son has reported, the false information stayed on the site for more than four months and also appeared on at least two other sites that had used *Wikipedia* as their source (Seigenthaler, 2005). This incident, as well as many others, has caused people to question the reliability of *Wikipedia*. According to Jane Kirtley (2006), the issue of reliability poses a real problem for the users of *Wikipedia*:

It's hard to defend an anonymous poster who uploads a damaging falsehood about someone on a Web site that purports to provide facts from a "neutral point of view. . . ." Either accuracy matters, or it doesn't. If the denizens of cyberspace want to be taken seriously, they might want to be responsible for what they produce. (p. 66)

Paragraph contains a long quotation from Kirtley, student's summary of the Seigenthaler article, and facts that were found in several sources

THE LIMITATIONS OF WIKIPEDIA

7

Paragraph contains paraphrases from "Examples" and Wales as well as student's own conclusions

Bias is another problem for *Wikipedia*. Some critics have accused *Wikipedia* of having a liberal bias; in fact, a competitor, Conservapedia, lists many examples of liberal bias in *Wikipedia* entries. Accusing *Wikipedia* of being anti-American and anti-Christian ("Examples," 2007), Conservapedia questions the true agenda of the *Wikipedia* community. In a *Time* article, Jimmy Wales (2007), founder of *Wikipedia*, denies this liberal bias and accuses Conservapedia of having a conservative bias (p. 6). Still, such accusations do raise questions about the credibility of *Wikipedia*.

Paragraph combines ideas found in several sources, a paraphrases from Hafner, and student's own ideas

Wikipedia has tried to correct some of the problems that its critics have pointed out. In response to criticism of its policy of allowing writers and editors to remain anonymous, Jimmy Wales changed *Wikipedia*'s policy. Now, writers and editors have to provide their user names and thus take responsibility for the content they contribute. In addition, *Wikipedia* has made it possible for administrators to block certain sites from those wishing to edit them and to prevent certain writers and editors from posting or changing information. In addition, users must now be registered with *Wikipedia* for four days before they can change certain controversial entries (Hafner, 2006). However, authorship is still a problem. Most readers have no idea who has written an article that they are reading or whether or not that person can be trusted. Given *Wikipedia*'s basic philosophy, there is no way to solve this problem.

Paragraph combines ideas found in several sources with paraphrases and quotations from McHenry

Of course, even traditional encyclopedias have shortcomings. For example, a study by the journal *Nature* found that although *Wikipedia* included errors, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* also did. Nevertheless, Robert McHenry (2005), a former editor of *Britannica*, points out that *Wikipedia* articles often do not get better through editing; instead, they frequently get worse. He goes on to say that *Wikipedia* suffers

THE LIMITATIONS OF WIKIPEDIA

8

because it lacks the oversight that only a good editor can provide: “skills, knowledge, experience, and maybe a touch of talent.” McHenry observes that out of concern for *Britannica*’s reputation, at least four people check every article for accuracy. He points out that professional editors do more than just check spelling and grammar; they also stand in “for the eventual reader in order to assure that what was written was clear, logical, and to the point.” Since *Wikipedia* has no professional editors, its writing may be ungrammatical, stylistically awkward, or unclear.

Comparison to Traditional Sources

Supporters of *Wikipedia* defend the site against those charges, noting that more traditional sources, such as respected peer-reviewed journals, also have their problems. For example, very new material is likely to be underrepresented or even omitted by a traditional print encyclopedia, which is published only every few years. In addition, some reviewers of articles that appear in peer-reviewed journals may have conflicts of interest. For example, a reviewer might reject an article that challenges his or her own work, or editors may favor certain authors over others. Also, it may be possible for reviewers to identify the work of a competitor, especially if the number of people working in a field is relatively small, and therefore let bias influence their evaluation of an article. Another problem is that it takes a long time for articles in peer-reviewed journals to get into print. Critics point out that by the time an article in a peer-reviewed journal gets into print, it may be outdated. As a result, peer-reviewed journals may not be as objective or as up-to-date as readers think they are.

Conclusion

Wikipedia is easy to access and easy to use. It includes information on just about any topic a researcher might want to explore. Still, it is not a reliable source for serious research,

Paragraph
contains ideas
found in several
sources and
student’s own
conclusions

THE LIMITATIONS OF *WIKIPEDIA*

9

Conclusion

primarily because of the many questions that have been raised about the reliability of its articles. Therefore, many high schools and colleges do not allow students to cite *Wikipedia* as a source. Granted, there are times when *Wikipedia* can be useful. For example, visitors to the site can skim articles on a variety of topics, and this preliminary reading can help them find or narrow a research topic. In addition, students can often find general information on *Wikipedia* about very current topics that may not be treated anywhere else. Finally, the computer links that appear at the end of most *Wikipedia* articles can be a good starting point for research. In general, however, because of the questionable authorship of its entries and the lack of expertise and objectivity of some (if not many) of its contributors, *Wikipedia* is not a reliable source.

THE LIMITATIONS OF WIKIPEDIA

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GLOSSARY

Abstract/Concrete language Abstract language names concepts or qualities that cannot be directly seen or touched: *love, emotion, evil, anguish*. Concrete language denotes objects or qualities that the senses can perceive: *fountain pen, leaky, shouting, rancid*. Abstract words are sometimes needed to express ideas, but they are very vague unless used with concrete supporting detail. The abstract phrase “The speaker was overcome with emotion” could mean almost anything, but the addition of concrete language clarifies the meaning: “He clenched his fist and shook it at the crowd” (anger).

Allusion A brief reference to literature, history, the Bible, mythology, popular culture, and so on that readers are expected to recognize. An allusion evokes a vivid impression in very few words. “The gardener opened the gate, and suddenly we found ourselves in Eden” suggests in one word (*Eden*) the stunning beauty of the garden.

Analogy A form of comparison that explains an unfamiliar element by comparing it to another that is more familiar. Analogies also enable writers to put abstract or technical information in simpler, more concrete terms: “The effect of pollution on the environment is like that of cancer on the body.”

Annotating The technique of recording one’s responses to a reading selection by writing notes in the margins of the text. Annotating a text might involve asking questions, suggesting possible parallels with other selections or with the reader’s own experience, arguing with the writer’s points, commenting on the writer’s style, or defining unfamiliar terms or concepts.

Antithesis A viewpoint opposite to one expressed in a *thesis*. In an argumentative essay, the thesis must be debatable. If no antithesis exists, the writer’s thesis is not debatable. (See also **Thesis**.)

Antonym A word opposite in meaning to another word. *Beautiful* is the antonym of *ugly*. *Synonym* is the antonym of *antonym*.

Argumentation The form of writing that takes a stand on an issue and attempts to convince readers by presenting a logical sequence of points supported by evidence. Unlike *persuasion*, which uses a number of different appeals, argumentation is primarily an appeal to reason. (See Chapter 14.)

Audience The people “listening” to a writer’s words. Writers who are sensitive to their audience will carefully choose a tone, examples, and

allusions that their readers will understand and respond to. For instance, an effective article attempting to persuade high school students not to drink alcohol would use examples and allusions pertinent to a teenager's life. Different examples would be chosen if the writer were addressing middle-aged members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Basis for comparison A fundamental similarity between two or more things that enables a writer to compare them. In a comparison of how two towns react to immigrants, the basis of comparison might be that both towns have a rapidly expanding immigrant population. (If one of the towns did not have any immigrants, this comparison would be illogical.)

Body paragraphs The paragraphs that develop and support an essay's thesis.

Brainstorming An invention technique that can be done individually or in a group. When writers brainstorm on their own, they jot down every fact or idea that relates to a particular topic. When they brainstorm in a group, they discuss a topic with others and write down the useful ideas that come up.

Causal chain A sequence of events when one event causes another event, which in turn causes yet another event.

Cause and effect The pattern of development that discusses either the reasons for an occurrence or the observed or predicted consequence of an occurrence. Often both causes and effects are discussed in the same essay. (See Chapter 10.)

Causes The reasons for an event, situation, or phenomenon. An *immediate cause* is an obvious one; a *remote cause* is less easily perceived. The *main cause* is the most important cause, whether it is immediate or remote. Other, less important causes that nevertheless encourage the effect in some way (for instance, by speeding it up or providing favorable circumstances for it) are called *contributory causes*.

Chronological order The time sequence of events. Chronological order is often used to organize a narrative; it is also used to structure a process essay.

Claim In Toulmin logic, the thesis or main point of an essay. Usually the claim is stated directly, but sometimes it is implied. (See also **Toulmin logic**.)

Classification and division The pattern of development that uses these two related methods of organizing information. *Classification* involves searching for common characteristics among various items and grouping them accordingly, thereby imposing order on randomly organized information. *Division* breaks up an entity into smaller groups or elements. Classification generalizes; division specifies. (See Chapter 12.)

Cliché An overused expression, such as *beauty is in the eye of the beholder*, *the good die young*, or *a picture is worth a thousand words*.

Clustering A method of invention whereby a writer groups ideas visually by listing the main topic in the center of a page, circling it, and surrounding it with words or phrases that identify the major points to be addressed. The writer then circles these words or phrases, creating new clusters or ideas for each of them.

Coherence The tight relationship between all the parts of an effective piece of writing. Such a relationship ensures that the writing will make sense to readers. For a piece of writing to be coherent, it must be logical and orderly, with effective *transitions* making the movement between sentences and paragraphs clear. Within and between paragraphs, coherence may also be enhanced by the repetition of key words and ideas, by the use of pronouns to refer to nouns mentioned previously, and by the use of parallel sentence structure.

Colloquialisms Expressions that are generally appropriate for conversation and informal writing but not usually acceptable for the writing you do in college, business, or professional settings. Examples of colloquial language include contractions; clipped forms (*fridge* for *refrigerator*); vague expressions such as *kind of* and *sort of*; conversation fillers such as *you know*; and other informal words and expressions, such as *get across* for *communicate* and *kids* for *children*.

Common knowledge Factual information that is widely available in reference sources, such as the dates of important historical events. Writers do not need to document common knowledge.

Comparison and contrast The pattern of development that focuses on similarities and differences between two or more subjects. In a general sense, *comparison* shows how two or more subjects are alike; *contrast* shows how they are different. (See Chapter 11; see also **Point-by-point comparison**; **Subject-by-subject comparison**.)

Conclusion The group of sentences or paragraphs that brings an essay to a close. To *conclude* means not only “to end” but also “to resolve.” Although a conclusion does not review all the issues discussed in an essay, the conclusion is the place to show that those issues have been resolved. An effective conclusion indicates that the writer is committed to what has been expressed, and it is the writer’s last chance to leave an impression or idea with readers.

Concrete language See **Abstract/Concrete language**.

Connotation The associations, meanings, or feelings a word suggests beyond its literal meaning. Literally, the word *home* means “one’s place of residence,” but *home* also connotes warmth and a sense of belonging. (See also **Denotation**.)

Contributory cause See **Causes**.

Deductive reasoning The method of reasoning that moves from a general premise to a specific conclusion. Deductive reasoning is the opposite of *inductive reasoning*. (See also **Syllogism**.)

Definition An explanation of a word's meaning; the pattern of development in which a writer explains what something or someone is. (See Chapter 13; see also **Extended definition**; **Formal definition**.)

Denotation The literal meaning of a word. The denotation of *home* is "one's place of residence." (See also **Connotation**.)

Description The pattern of development that presents a word picture of a thing, a person, a situation, or a series of events. (See Chapter 7; see also **Objective description**; **Subjective description**.)

Digression A remark or series of remarks that wanders from the main point of a discussion. In a personal narrative, a digression may be entertaining because of its irrelevance, but in other kinds of writing it is likely to distract and confuse readers.

Division See **Classification and division**.

Documentation The formal way of giving credit to the sources a writer borrows words or ideas from. Documentation allows readers to evaluate a writer's sources and to consult them if they wish. Papers written for literature and writing classes use the documentation style recommended by the Modern Language Association (MLA). (See Chapter 18.)

Dominant impression The mood or quality that is central to a piece of writing.

Essay A short work of nonfiction writing on a single topic that usually expresses the author's impressions or opinions. An essay may be organized around one of the patterns of development presented in Chapters 6 through 14 of this book, or it may combine several of these patterns.

Euphemism A polite term for an unpleasant concept. (*Passed away* is a euphemism for *died*.)

Evidence Facts and opinions used to support a statement, position, or idea. *Facts*, which may include statistics, may be drawn from research or personal experience; *opinions* may represent the conclusions of experts or the writer's own ideas.

Example A concrete illustration of a general point.

Exemplification The pattern of development that uses a single extended *example* or a series of shorter examples to support a thesis. (See Chapter 8.)

Extended definition A paragraph-, essay-, or book-length definition developed by means of one or more of the rhetorical strategies discussed in this book.

Fallacy A statement that resembles a logical argument but is actually flawed. Logical fallacies are often persuasive, but they unfairly manipulate readers to win agreement. Fallacies include begging the question; argument from analogy; personal (*ad hominem*) attacks; jumping to a conclusion (hasty or sweeping generalizations); false dilemmas (the either/or fallacy); equivocation; red herrings; you also (*tu quoque*); appeals to doubtful authority; misleading statistics; *post hoc* reasoning; and *non sequiturs*. See the section on “Recognizing Fallacies” (page 537) for explanations and examples.

Figures of speech (also known as *figurative language*) Imaginative language used to suggest a special meaning or create a special effect. Three of the most common figures of speech are *similes*, *metaphors*, and *personification*.

Formal definition A brief explanation of a word’s meaning as it appears in the dictionary.

Freewriting A method of invention that involves writing without stopping for a fixed period — perhaps five or ten minutes — without paying attention to spelling, grammar, or punctuation. The goal of freewriting is to let ideas flow and get them down on paper.

Grounds In Toulmin logic, the material that a writer uses to support a claim. Grounds may be evidence (facts or expert opinions) or appeals to the emotions or values of an audience. (See also **Toulmin logic**.)

Highlighting A technique used by a reader to record responses to a reading selection by marking the text with symbols. Highlighting a text might involve underlining important ideas, boxing key terms, numbering a series of related points, circling unfamiliar words (or placing question marks next to them), drawing vertical lines next to an interesting or important passage, drawing arrows to connect related points, or placing asterisks next to discussions of the selection’s central issues or themes.

Hyperbole Deliberate exaggeration for emphasis or humorous effect: “I froze to death out in the storm”; “She has hundreds of boyfriends”; “Senior year passed by in a second.” The opposite of hyperbole is *understatement*.

Imagery A set of verbal pictures of sensory experiences. These pictures, conveyed through concrete details, make a description vivid and immediate to the reader. Some images are literal (“The cows were so white they almost glowed in the dark”); others are more figurative (“The black-and-white cows looked like maps, with the continents in black and the seas in white”). A pattern of imagery (repeated images of, for example, shadows, forests, or fire) may run through a piece of writing.

Immediate cause See **Causes**.

Inductive reasoning The method of reasoning that moves from specific evidence to a general conclusion based on this evidence. Inductive reasoning is the opposite of *deductive reasoning*.

Instructions A kind of process essay whose purpose is to enable readers to *perform* a process. Instructions use the present tense and speak directly to readers: “Walk at a moderate pace for twenty minutes.”

Introduction An essay’s opening. Depending on the length of an essay, the introduction may be one paragraph or several paragraphs. In an introduction, a writer tries to encourage the audience to read the essay that follows. Therefore, the writer must choose tone and diction carefully, indicate what the paper is about, and suggest to readers what direction it will take.

Invention (also known as *prewriting*) The stage of writing when a writer explores the writing assignment, focuses ideas, and ultimately decides on a thesis for an essay. A writer might begin by thinking through the requirements of the assignment — the essay’s purpose, length, and audience. Then, using one or more methods of invention — such as *freewriting*, *questions for probing*, *brainstorming*, *clustering*, and *journal writing* — the writer can formulate a tentative thesis and begin to write the essay.

Irony Language that points to a discrepancy between two different levels of meaning. *Verbal irony* is characterized by a gap between what is stated and what is really meant, which often has the opposite meaning — for instance, “his humble abode” (referring to a millionaire’s estate). *Situational irony* points to a discrepancy between what actually happens and what readers expect will happen. This kind of irony is present, for instance, when a character, trying to frighten a rival, ends up frightening himself. *Dramatic irony* occurs when the reader understands more about what is happening in a story than the character who is telling the story does. For example, a narrator might tell an anecdote that he intends to illustrate how clever he is, while it is obvious to the reader from the story’s events that the narrator has made a fool of himself because of his gullibility. (See also **Sarcasm**.)

Jargon The specialized vocabulary of a profession or academic field. Although the jargon of a particular profession is an efficient means of communication within that field, it may not be clear or meaningful to readers outside that profession.

Journal writing A method of invention that involves recording ideas that emerge from reading or other experiences and then exploring them in writing.

Looping A method of invention that involves isolating one idea from a piece of freewriting and using this idea as a focus for a new piece of freewriting.

Main cause See **Causes**.

Metaphor A comparison of two dissimilar things that does not use the words *like* or *as* (“The small waves were the same, chucking the rowboat under the chin . . .” — E. B. White).

Narration The pattern of development that tells a story. (See Chapter 6.)

Objective description A detached, factual picture presented in a plain and direct manner. Although pure objectivity is impossible to achieve, writers of science papers, technical reports, and news articles, among others, strive for precise language that is free of value judgments.

Paradox A statement that seems self-contradictory or absurd but is nonetheless true.

Paragraph The basic unit of an essay. A paragraph is composed of related sentences that together express a single idea. This main idea is often stated in a single *topic sentence*. Paragraphs are also graphic symbols on the page, mapping the progress of the ideas in the essay and providing visual breaks for readers.

Parallelism The use of similar grammatical elements within a sentence or sentences. “I like hiking, skiing, and to cook” is not parallel because *hiking* and *skiing* are gerund forms (*-ing*) while *to cook* is an infinitive form. Revised for parallelism, the sentence could read either “I like hiking, skiing, and cooking” or “I like to hike, to ski, and to cook.” As a stylistic technique, parallelism can provide emphasis through repetition — for example, “Walk groundly, talk profoundly, drink roundly, sleep soundly” (William Hazlitt). Parallelism is also a powerful oratorical technique: “Until justice is blind to color, until education is unaware of race, until opportunity is unconcerned with the color of men’s skins, emancipation will be a proclamation but not a fact” (Lyndon B. Johnson). Finally, parallelism can increase *coherence* within a paragraph or an essay.

Paraphrase The restatement of another person’s words in one’s own words, following the order and emphasis of the original. Paraphrase is frequently used in source-based papers, where the purpose is to use information gathered during research to support the ideas in the paper. For example, Bruce Catton’s “Grant was the modern man emerging; beyond him, ready to come on the stage, was the great age of steel and machinery, of crowded cities and a restless burgeoning vitality” (page 395) might be paraphrased as, “Grant was a man of a new era; following him, glimpsed but not fully seen, was the time of new technologies, with its crowded urban life and growing restlessness.”

Personification Describing concepts or objects as if they were human (“the chair slouched”; “the wind sighed outside the window”).

Persuasion The method a writer uses to move an audience to adopt a belief or follow a course of action. To persuade an audience, a writer relies on the various appeals — to the emotions, to reason, or to ethics. Persuasion is different from *argumentation*, which appeals primarily to reason.

Plagiarism Presenting the words or ideas of someone else as if they were one's own (whether intentionally or unintentionally). Plagiarism should always be avoided.

Point-by-point comparison A comparison in which the writer first makes a point about one subject and then follows it with a comparable point about the other subject. (See also **Subject-by-subject comparison**.)

Post hoc reasoning A logical fallacy that involves looking back at two events that occurred in chronological sequence and wrongly assuming that the first event caused the second. For example, just because a car will not start after a thunderstorm, one cannot automatically assume that the storm caused the problem.

Prewriting See **Invention**.

Principle of classification In a classification-and-division essay, the quality the items have in common. For example, if a writer were classifying automobiles, one principle of classification might be “repair records.”

Process The pattern of development that presents a series of steps in a procedure in chronological order and shows how this sequence of steps leads to a particular result. (See Chapter 9.)

Process explanation A kind of process essay whose purpose is to enable readers to understand a process rather than perform it.

Purpose A writer's reason for writing. A writer's purpose may, for example, be to entertain readers with an amusing story, to inform them about a dangerous disease, to move them to action by enraging them with an example of injustice, or to change their perspective by revealing a hidden dimension of a person or situation.

Quotation The exact words of a source, enclosed in quotation marks. A quotation should be used only to present a particularly memorable statement or to avoid a paraphrase that would change the meaning of the original.

Refutation The attempt to counter an opposing argument by revealing its weaknesses. Three of the most common weaknesses are logical flaws in the argument, inadequate evidence, and irrelevance. Refutation greatly strengthens an argument by showing that the writer is aware of the complexity of the issue and has considered opposing viewpoints.

Remote cause See **Causes**.

Rhetorical question A question asked for effect and not meant to be answered.

Rogerial argument A strategy put forth by psychologist Carl Rogers that rejects the adversarial approach that characterizes many arguments. Rather than attacking the opposition, Rogers suggests acknowledging the validity of opposing positions. By finding areas of agreement, a Rogerian argument reduces conflict and increases the chance that the final position will satisfy all parties.

Sarcasm Deliberately insincere and biting irony — for example, “That’s okay — I love it when you borrow things and don’t return them.”

Satire Writing that uses wit, irony, and ridicule to attack foolishness, incompetence, or evil in a person or idea. Satire has a different purpose from comedy, which usually intends simply to entertain. For a classic example of satire, see Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal,” page 692.

Sexist language Language that stereotypes people according to gender. Writers often use plural constructions to avoid sexist language. For example, *the doctors . . . they* can be used instead of *the doctor . . . he*. Words such as *police officer* and *firefighter* can be used instead of *police-man* and *fireman*.

Simile A comparison of two dissimilar things using the words *like* or *as* (“Hills Like White Elephants” — Ernest Hemingway).

Slang Informal words whose meanings vary from locale to locale or change as time passes. Slang is frequently associated with a particular group of people — for example, bikers, musicians, or urban youth. Slang is inappropriate in college writing.

Subject-by-subject comparison A comparison that discusses one subject in full and then goes on to discuss the next subject. (See also **Point-by-point comparison**.)

Subjective description A description that contains value judgments (*a saintly person*, for example). Whereas objective language is distanced from an event or object, *subjective language* is involved. A subjective description focuses on the author’s reaction to the event, conveying not just a factual record of details but also their significance. Subjective language may include poetic or colorful words that impart a judgment or an emotional response (*stride*, *limp*, *meander*, *hobble*, *stroll*, *plod*, or *shuffle* instead of *walk*). Subjective descriptions often include *figures of speech*.

Summary The ideas of a source as presented in one’s own words. Unlike a paraphrase, a summary conveys only a general sense of a passage, without following the order and emphasis of the original.

Syllogism A basic form of deductive reasoning. Every syllogism includes three parts: a major premise that makes a general statement (“Confinement is physically and psychologically damaging”); a minor premise that makes a related but more specific statement (“Zoos confine animals”); and a conclusion drawn from these two premises (“Therefore, zoos are physically and psychologically damaging to animals”).

Symbol A person, event, or object that stands for something more than its literal meaning.

Synonym A word with the same basic meaning as another word. A synonym for *loud* is *noisy*. Most words in the English language have several synonyms, but each word has unique nuances or shades of meaning. (See also **Connotation**.)

Thesis An essay's main idea; the idea that all the points in the body of the essay support. A thesis may be implied, but it is usually stated explicitly in the form of a *thesis statement*. In addition to conveying the essay's main idea, the thesis statement may indicate the writer's approach to the subject and the writer's purpose. It may also indicate the pattern of development that will structure the essay.

Topic sentence A sentence stating the main idea of a paragraph. Often, but not always, the topic sentence opens the paragraph.

Toulmin logic A method of structuring an argument according to the way arguments occur in everyday life. Developed by philosopher Stephen Toulmin, Toulmin logic divides an argument into three parts: the *claim*, the *grounds*, and the *warrant*.

Transitions Words or expressions that link ideas in a piece of writing. Long essays frequently contain *transitional paragraphs* that connect one part of the essay to another. Writers use a variety of transitional expressions, such as *afterward*, *because*, *consequently*, *for instance*, *furthermore*, *however*, and *likewise*. See the list of transitions on page 57.

Understatement Deliberate deemphasis for effect: "The people who live near the Mississippi River are not exactly looking forward to more flooding"; "Emily was a little upset about failing math." The opposite of understatement is *hyperbole*.

Unity The desirable attribute of a paragraph in which every sentence relates directly to the paragraph's main idea. This main idea is often stated in a *topic sentence*.

Warrant In Toulmin logic, the inference that connects the claim to the grounds. The warrant can be a belief that is taken for granted or an assumption that underlies the argument. (See also **Toulmin logic**.)

Writing process The sequence of tasks a writer undertakes when writing an essay. During *invention*, or *prewriting*, the writer gathers information and ideas and develops a thesis. During the *arrangement* stage, the writer organizes material into a logical sequence. During *drafting and revision*, the essay is actually written and then rewritten. Finally, during *editing and proofreading*, the writer puts the finishing touches on the essay by correcting misspellings, checking punctuation, searching for grammatical inaccuracies, and so on. These stages occur in no fixed order; many effective writers move back and forth among them. (See Chapters 2–5.)

Grammar in Context Boxes

Each rhetorical chapter introduction contains a Grammar in Context box that offers advice about a common grammar, punctuation, or mechanics issue — one often associated with the pattern discussed in the chapter. Refer to the list below to find Grammar in Context boxes throughout *Patterns for College Writing*.

Avoiding Run-Ons	102
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